The Alfred Jewel

Oxford: Mdcccci


Read;-to better read
Life-Nature-all things.
MHL
EX
Libris
Lady Huggins

THE ALFRED JEWEL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Where so many angels have been treading it is perhaps unwise for a humble student to venture in. Still, it may be worth while to make another guess at the truth about the Alfred jewel.

Since 1698, when Dr. Musgrave, a Fellow of the Royal Society, published the first notice of the jewel in the "Philosophical Transactions" (No. 247), it has been suggested that the jewel may have been (1) an amulet (Dr. Musgrave's suggestion); (2) a pendant to a chain or collar; (3) an umbilicus, or head of a roller for a M.S.; (4) the top of a stilus; (5) the head of a book-pointer; (6) the top of a standard; (7) the head of a sceptre; (8) an ornament for Alfred's helmet. This last is the recent suggestion of Professor Earle, and is most engagingly presented in his interesting book, "The Alfred Jewel."

Without criticizing in detail these various views, and before offering a new suggestion or two, I should like to point out apropos of the book-pointer view—the one favoured by Sir John Evans in his address at Winchester—that the jewel is by no means uncomfortable in the hand. A little experimenting with one of the excellent facsimiles which we owe to the Millenary proves this. Also, the view that the jewel may have been the head of a sceptre scarcely seems to have received sufficient consideration. The illumination from the Book of Kells, which Professor Earle refers to for his own view, at least suggests a sceptre with a flat head.

In considering any suggestion as to its probable use it must be remembered that the Alfred jewel is not unique. A jewel, smaller it is true and circular,

Times. 3.10.01.

THE ALFRED JEWEL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Mr. Elworthy would appear to be incapable of apprehending my particular predicament in this "Five o'clock tea" controversy over the "Alfred Jewel"—which simply is that the traces of Oriental influence to be observed in its form and decoration support Professor Earle's contention that it was meant to be worn on a helmet. Surely this very humble suggestion is deserving of some consideration, especially as the "Alfred Jewel" was fastened to whatever it was attached in the same manner as the two parts—the "knop" and the "flower"—of the Mo(n)gol *toru* were, and are, fastened together.

After Professor Earle's suggestion of the purpose of the "jewel," I should be inclined to accept that of Lady Huggins. Mr. Elworthy sneers at it, but he, transparently, knows nothing of the attiring of womenkind or he would know that pins for female wear are still made in the East of all sizes, up to 6in. and 8in. in length, and of the most beautiful forms, with every elaboration of art; and that, in the way cheap trinketry, similar pins are often to be seen for sale in the shop windows of Regent-street and the Burlington-arcade. The very etymology of the word "pin" goes to prove that the article signified by it is intended not only for the mere mechanical use but the artistic adorning of women—it being the same word as "pink," to embroider; "finch," the painted bird; "pica," originally the illuminated initial in black letter manuscript; "piccadilly," an embroidered collar; "pickles," mixed acetified vegetables; "picture," &c., and in Latin "pingere," to paint, and in Greek "Pœcile" (compare Piccadilly), the Painted Porch, and in Sanscrit *pecas*, a "jewel," and *pecalas*, "adorned."

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

St. Pihtas Day, 1901. GEORGE BIRDWOOD

Times. THE ALFRED JEWEL. 1.10.01.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Some weeks ago you were good enough to print two letters from myself, and now that the millenary is over and you have again opened your columns on this subject I trust you will permit me to refer to it once more. Lady Huggins's suggestion in your issue of today, that the so-called "jewel" may have been the head of a pin for female wear, is new, but will hardly bear examination, inasmuch as the socket is nearly large enough to hold an ordinary lead pencil, and a pin of that size for fastening any garment would be monstrous.

My contention that the "jewel" was the handle of a pointer was met by Sir George Birdwood with much learning, Oriental and classical, as to the etymology of the word jewel, while I was allowed to be castigated for presuming to offer an opinion differing from that of Professor Earle, and there it was left. In your report of the proceedings at Winchester I read that Professor Skeat spoke "of the thing called an œstel, which Alfred was said to have presented to certain Bishops with his books," and he went on to say that one solution of the "jewel" mystery was that the œstel was an indicator, and this seemed to be his opinion. Sir John Evans more distinctly supported my contention that it "was the head (I said handle) of a pointer for pointing out to the reader the line which he had reached."

After being sat upon and demolished without opportunity of reply, it is satisfactory to an obscure nobody to find two such authorities maintaining that after all his view was the right one and that it is now generally

The Alfred Jewel

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Henry Frowde, M.A.
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The Alfred Jewel

An Historical Essay

By

John Earle, M.A., LL.D.

At the Clarendon Press

FRONT

BACK

ENAMEL

RIGHT

LEFT

THE JEWEL IN FOUR ASPECTS

WITH SEPARATE FIGURE OF ENAMEL

The Alfred Jewel:

An Historical Essay

By

John Earle, M.A., LL.D.

Rector of Swanswick, Prebendary of Wells
Rawlinsonian Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford

With Illustrations and Map

Oxford
At the Clarendon Press
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PREFACE

IT is full fifty years since I began to contemplate the Alfred Jewel with a wonder and curiosity which became a habit. At length, in the latter half of that period, the vague attitude of enquiry began to point in a definite direction, and to exhibit susceptibility of development suggesting promise of possible discovery. Prompted by such anticipations, I one day ventured to express a wish to the Principal of Hertford College that he would exercise his well-known graphic talent upon the Alfred Jewel, and make some enlarged drawings of it suitable for a Public Lecture. The result was that he gave me a beautiful set of coloured drawings of the Jewel in various aspects admirably calculated for exhibition in the Lecture

Room. Thus equipped, I was able to make the subject more intelligible and more attractive, and I lectured upon it the oftener. As it has not been my wont to write my lectures out in full, it was all the more necessary for me on every new occasion to make a fresh study of the Jewel. In this recurring process new lights rose at wide intervals of time, and drew me on to devote more thought to the object and to the times associated with it; and I found more than I had looked for in the design, and more (I think) than I should have found, but for the generous aid so readily extended to me by Dr. Boyd.

It was after such a lecture delivered in May, 1899, that I had the great and unexpected pleasure of a proposal from the Delegates of the Press to make a book of it. I was able to accept this proposal without misgiving, because I was satisfied that I had a solid interpretation to offer—one which had been slowly matured and scrupulously tested by

every means in my power. All the old theories had come to nothing: there was not one of them that could be seriously advocated as resting upon evidence either in history or in common sense and the natural reason of things. In saying so much as this, I am only accounting for my readiness to accept the task, and not by any means prejudging the general verdict upon the validity of my argument. In this argument I seek to establish the intimate relation of the Jewel with the history and the mind and the person of Alfred of Wessex, not indeed as a scientifically demonstrated fact, but as a well-founded and abundantly supported probability. I have no desire that this conclusion should be admitted without a complete and rigid scrutiny.

In the carrying out of this undertaking I have received welcome and much-needed help from many quarters. The subject is one that calls for illustration by maps and drawings; and I desire to express my sincere acknowledge-

ments to Mr. Alfred A. Clarke of Wells for his four drawings, among which I will particularly mention his characteristic landscape of the Isle of Athelney.

The map of Athelney and the lands adjacent is very ingeniously devised for exhibiting the contrast between the low level of the moorland and the contours of the rising country around; it is expressive and intelligible at a glance: and for this excellent illustration my acknowledgements are due to Mr. Bernhard V. Darbishire.

My hearty thanks are due to Mr. Charles H. Read of the British Museum for the ample information he kindly afforded me concerning the gold rings of the Saxon period which are in his department. Also for the permission which he gave (as Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries) to transfer to these pages their engraving from the Book of Kells, and also their three figures of the gold ring of queen Æthelswith.

To those gentlemen of Somerset who have aided me with local information and hospitality

and personal guidance, I have good cause to be always grateful. Major Barrett, junior, of Moredon, the owner of the Isle of Athelney, took me over the ground in a manner that is very agreeable to remember, and caused me to see the historical sites of his country with every advantage. It was under his auspices that I first realized the full import of Alfred's fort at Borough Bridge, and what a speaking object-lesson it certainly is. I had seen it in 1856, but I had not adequately appreciated it.

From Mr. Cely Trevelian of Midelney Place I learnt much that was useful to me concerning the history and present conditions of the moorlands of Somerset. He was my hospitable friend and companion over the country on either side of the Parrett in the circle of Langport, and from that to Borough Bridge. Under his guidance I revisited Aller (pronounced Oller), and renewed acquaintance with its sacred associations, after an interval of forty-four years. In 1856 I was conducted by an old Oriel friend

who was my host, the Rev. James Coleman, then Curate of the parish in which Athelney is situated; he subsequently became Vicar of Cheddar and Prebendary of Wells. When I entered upon the present work, after so long an interval, it was with Mr. Coleman that I began to make enquiries for local information.

To Sir Alexander Acland Hood I am indebted for genealogical and topographical information, and particularly for some new light on the history of the Jewel, now for the first time made public. The statement in the manuscript of Mr. Thomas Palmer, which is preserved at Fairfield, that the Jewel was 'dug up,' is a new item in the circumstances of the discovery, to which I attach important evidential weight.

I have also to thank Sir Cuthbert Slade of Maunsel, for his courtesy in answering my enquiries, genealogical and territorial, concerning the Slade family.

On Mr. C. F. Bell, the Assistant Keeper of the

Ashmolean Museum, I chiefly depended for help in that part of my subject where I was most wanting, namely in the technicalities of ancient art, and especially concerning enamels.

To my friend Dr. Shadwell my obligations are not the less but the greater for that they are somewhat indefinable. He has redd through the proofs, and has given me valuable suggestions, and he has always been ready to help when I needed advice.

For me this trinket has assumed the proportions of a serious historical problem, and its investigation has been rewarded with new light in many directions, and I do not think I shall regret the time spent upon it, even though my conclusions should hereafter be modified or even refuted. I hold that, apart from the conclusions, the investigation itself was worth the while, but when I say this I am not to be understood as admitting that I have little confidence in my conclusions.

In putting forth this Essay, I desire to

convince the reader only as fully as I am convinced myself, that is to say, with a conviction which makes no claim to finality, but lies open to correction in case of new light or better use of old data; yet which nevertheless, in the mean time and for the main issues of the enquiry, reaches a degree of probability whereby all doubt and uncertainty is practically excluded.

J. E.

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THE ALFRED JEWEL

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE ALFRED JEWEL

THE subject of this Essay is preserved in the Ashmolean Museum, which has been its home for a period of time now approaching two hundred years. It is there installed under

glass in such a manner that every side of it is plainly exhibited to the eye of the visitor. It bears an inscription in conspicuous lettering which sets forth that by Alfred's order it was

made, and this is the ground upon which it is known as THE ALFRED JEWEL.

The Alfred Jewel has been compared to a battledore, not untruly for the matter of shape; but the wide diversity of size makes the comparison seem incongruous. The extreme length of the Jewel is a very small fraction under two inches and a half; its greatest width is just one inch and a fifth; its thickness barely half an inch.

It contains a sitting Figure enamelled on a plate of gold which is protected in front by a slab of rock crystal, and at the back by a gold plate engraved; the whole enshrined in a golden frame of delicately executed filigree work. The picture is visible through the rock crystal, making the obverse of the Jewel; while the reverse is formed by the gold plate which is at the back of the enamelled plate. Upon this gold plate is engraved an allegorical design. Both these surfaces (obverse and reverse) are flat, but in every other part of the Jewel the surface is rounded.

The rounded contours may be likened to those of a pigeon's egg. If we imagine a longi-

tudinal section of a pigeon's egg, the engraved plate at the back of the picture will correspond to the plane of the egg's diameter. From this plane, if we measure three-quarters of an inch in the girth of the egg, and then take another section parallel to the gold plate at the back, we obtain the front surface of the crystal, through which the Enamel is visible.

The effect of this arrangement is, that the sides all round the Jewel are curved and sloping, and that the obverse is of more contracted area than the reverse, and also that the measurement of the sloping side exceeds that of the thickness. The head of the sitting Figure occupies the broad end of the oval section; the smaller end is prolonged, and is fashioned like the head of a wild boar on the obverse, but the reverse of this head is flat and covered with fish-like scales.

The snout is projected in the form of a socket adapted to receive a peg or stem; athwart this socket is a cross-pin, having a head at one of its ends, while the other end is riveted. This indicates that the Jewel was furnished with a stem which has perished, and which, therefore, was not metallic, but of some organic material,

perhaps walrus ivory. Around the sloping sides runs a legend :

✠ AELFRED MEꝺ HEHT ꝺEWYRꝺAN

Alfred me ordered make

and this legend starts from the narrowest point of the oval, beginning on the right-hand side and running round to the corresponding point on the left, so that it encircles the oval completely, running in the contrary direction to that with which we are familiar in our coins, which are redd from left to right, as indeed were also the coins of the ninth century.

Some have doubted whether the owner of the Jewel was the famous Alfred of Wessex. It has been urged that the name of ÆLFRED in the Epigraph is not of itself adequate proof of the fact, and it must be admitted that this is literally true. And it is not superfluous to point out the inconsequence of such reasoning, for it has actually been advanced in serious argument. Samuel Pegge, an antiquary of repute, wrote in *Archæologia* ii as if there had been but one eminent person of the name of Alfred :— 'There is no doubt but this κειμήλιον was

once the property of the great King Ælfred, notwithstanding the goodness of the work which has been an objection to its authenticity; for the king's name is expressly mentioned in the inscription.' There were many persons of that name in the course of the Saxon period, and the name was not confined to men born after his time, for there were persons of this name who were men of mark among his contemporaries, one of whom (to say the least) was certainly his senior.

When Swithun died, in 862 (in Alfred's fourteenth year), his successor in the See of Winchester was named ÆLFRED.

A contemporary of position and intelligence and of great wealth was that ÆLFRED who redeemed from heathen hands a noble volume of the Gospels, and conveyed it by a solemn deed of gift in his own name and that of his wife to the brotherhood of Christ Church, Canterbury [1]. That volume is the *Codex Aureus*, which

[1] This remarkable document begins thus :—✠ In nomine domini nostri Ihesu Christi. Ic ÆLFRED aldormon and Werburg min gefera begetan ðas béc æt hæðnum herge mid uncre clæne feó ðæt ðoune wæs mid clæne golde, and ðæt wit deodan for Godes lufan and for uncre saule ðearf ond

is now in the Royal Library at Stockholm. The Will of this Alfred, who in the course of that document styles himself 'Elfred dux,' is one of the most precious relics of Saxon antiquity[1].

A few years after the king's death, the Chronicle records, in 906, the death of an Alfred, who was Reeve of Bath.

It has been argued that with such facts before us the ownership of the Alfred Jewel must be a matter of uncertainty, for we only know that it was ordered by a person of the name of Alfred. Such arguments may sometimes be heard from persons whose opinions are entitled to respect, but I am not aware that any one has undertaken to reason out and maintain this view in a published writing. And perhaps if we attend well to the whole of the evidence, we shall see

forðon ðe wit noldan ðæt ðas halgan beoc lencg in ðære hæðenesse wunaden. '✠ In the name of our Lord Jesu Christ. I Alfred alderman and Werburg my consort purchased these books at a heathen host with our clean money, that is to say with clean gold; and that we two did for God's love and for the benefit of our souls, and for that we would not that these holy books should longer lie in hethenesse.' Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, No. 634.

[1] Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus*, No. 317; Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, No. 558; Earle, *Land Charters*, p. 152.

no cause to marvel at the unanimity of authors in accepting this Jewel as a personal possession of king Alfred's, and (in some measure, diversely estimated) as a product of his own artistic design.

It is not the name by itself, but this name taken in connexion with the richness and costliness of the work, with the thoughtful ingenuity of its device and composition, and with the symbolic meanings which must be assigned to certain parts of the structure;—such evidences as these, again combined with certain external evidences, namely, the locality in which the Jewel was found, and any affinities apparent in the above data with the career or exploits of the king, or with his character and tastes,—when the ownership is questioned, we find ourselves face to face with an accumulation of evidence varying in quality and requiring to be judged by the delicate and sensitive standard of probability. In presence of such a problem we should not neglect the impressions and expressed opinions of persons whose instincts have been cultivated in the sphere of such probabilities.

George Hickes, in 1705, mentions some doubting critics, whose difficulty lay in the beauty and perfection of the work. They could not understand how such artistic work could proceed from Anglo-Saxon artists in the ninth century. But for himself, he added, the mere sight of the Jewel had been enough, and that from his first view of it he had never doubted that it was a personal possession of the great king Alfred [1].

When an elaborate piece of workmanship like the Alfred Jewel is presented to the experienced mind and practised eye of a man like Hickes, the evidence is rapidly, almost unconsciously, sifted, and the probabilities converge to a focus, so as to produce a conviction which seems like a simple apprehension of the senses. I welcome Hickes's expression of confidence as a confirmation of that which I have experienced myself. But while I am entirely free from uncertainty I quite recognize the reasonableness of the doubt, and I know that (logically speaking) the

[1] 'Quoad opificium autem, tam elegans quidem id est et perfectum, ut eius antiquitatem in dubium vocandi doctis nonnullis occasionem dederit, etsi *Ælfredi* regis hoc olim fuisse peculium, ex quo primum vidi, nunquam dubitavi.' *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus*, vol. i, p. 144.

uncertainty is there. And I know also that many of my readers will entertain it and will look more or less dubiously upon the assumption of certainty in this matter. And, indeed, there is a certain advantage in having to reckon with this sceptical attitude of mind, insomuch as the presence of doubt has a stimulating effect in furnishing the discourse with a determinate aim and direction. It will set me on the alert, that I may not miss any incidental chance of a reflection tending to assure those who would be gratified to think that we do indeed possess a relic intimately associated with the person, and with the mind, of ALFRED, KING OF WESSEX.

CHAPTER II

THE EPIGRAPH OR LEGEND

We must now consider and see what we can learn from the Epigraph. This was the cue whereby Hickes introduced the Jewel into the argument of his *Dissertatio Epistolaris*, and there gave us the cream of the discussions which had been developed in the space of twelve years from the discovery. Observing that in a Saxon inscription which Dr. Hans Sloane had communicated to the *Philosophical Transactions* (No. 247) only two letters of Anglo-Saxon form occurred, the C and the G, he proceeded to describe and discuss the Jewel in all the points of view which up to that time had occupied the attention of the curious. The forms to which he adverted were the angular C and G, which however are rather Epigraphic than Saxonic forms. These

square letters occur (as Mr. Falconer Madan informs me) in the inscriptions of the sixth and seventh centuries in Gaul, Spain, and Britain. Hickes added that all the other letters of the Epigraph were in ordinary Roman characters[1]:

AELFRED MEL HEHT LEWYRLAN

In fact there was only one place where a distinctly Saxon character might have come in, namely in the place of the W, which instead of the Runic Wên (ƿ) is composed of two Roman V's. There is no place for the Runic Thorn þ).

He had been pursuing an argument, of which the aim was to show that from the time of Alfred the characteristic features of Anglo-Saxon writing were less used, being superseded by Gallic or Italic forms. He attributes the change to the teachers which the king had drawn from Gaul. That such a change was taking place in Alfred's time is quite manifest, but its

[1] 'Saxonici ductus duas tantum literas habet, L et L.' *Thesaurus*, vol. i, p. 142.

beginnings were further back; the taste for Frankish fashions having been introduced by his grandfather Ecgberht, who had passed years of exile at the Court of Charlemagne. Doubtless the movement grew under the influence of Alfred, who not only had visited Rome, but in all probability had resided there for some years.

If now passing from the alphabetic characters we consider the syntax of this sentence, we shall find that it varies so widely from our habits of speech at the present time as to furnish something like a measure of the intervening period, and as it were to render some account of the lapse of a thousand years. Let us begin by translating the sentence verbally with the minimum of change, retaining the selfsame words in their modern guise. On this plan the sentence will run thus: 'Alfred me hight work;' where the baldness of the diction exhibits roughly the gulf there is between this Epigraph and our present usage. Each word is English, but the sentence is far from being so. This great contrast is the result of a combination of causes, and it may be resolved into four chief

movements which have slowly operated during the long interval.

(1) A change has taken place in the collocation of words in forming a sentence. The governed pronoun stands in a place where it is now inadmissible: the present habit of the language requires that the pronoun 'me' should come in after its governing verb. If we make this change, we shall see that the sentence will become a trifle more like English, thus: 'Alfred hight work me.'

(2) Another movement is that which in process of time takes place in the usage of words. There is a fashion in the choice of words for the clothing of our ideas, and that fashion changes sometimes capriciously and fitfully, but for the most part so slowly and gradually that it takes an era of time to make the change conspicuous. Words are liable to this kind of alteration in various degrees, and this inequality of change is observable even in a sentence of four words. The verb HEHT, *hight*, has undergone so great a change of sense that to the general reader it is apt to be unintelligible[1].

[1] This is briefly explained in my *English Philology*, § 270.

But while this verb has altered greatly, the verb 'work' has altered little. Still, it has altered, and it is no longer the right word for its place.

The remaining two words have in usage undergone no change at all. The pronoun MEC has suffered alteration in form by dropping a consonant, but it is absolutely unchanged in its application. Indeed, it may be stated as a general law, that pronouns as a class are among the slowest of words to admit semantic change.

Nevertheless there is a group of words which are still more unchangeable in signification, and these are the Proper Nouns. External changes of form they do admit, but not the internal change of sense. The name ÆLFRED is the form prevalent on the coinage of his reign, but there are variations, thus: ÆLFRED, ÆLBRED, ELFRED, ELFERED; and there is the form ALFRED, which has become established in modern English in consequence of the fact that our earliest popular histories of the king were derived from Latin books, in which language his name was commonly spelt ALFREDUS. But

whatever changes may pass over the visible representation of the word, there is no alteration possible in the relation between this word and the memory of that royal person whose proper name it was.

If now we remove the words that have suffered a semantic change, and substitute those which at the present time seem most natural, the sentence will take this form: 'Alfred ordered make me;' and thus it approaches another step towards the present manner of our speech.

(3) The third movement to be noticed is that from the flexional to the phrasal method of syntax. The word GEWYRCAN is a flexional verb, the last syllable, -AN, being the sign of the infinitive mood, and indicating the syntactical function of that word in the sentence. By slow degrees this method of syntax fell out of use, and another way came up of expressing the same function. Instead of the syllable -AN at the end of the verb, a little word, 'to,' was set before the verb, with the same effect of expressing the infinitive mood. If now we add this change to the other modifications of our

sentence, we shall bring it considerably nearer to current speech, thus: 'Alfred ordered to make me.' But still it wants something to reduce it into the shape which we can recognize as modern English.

(4) The fourth and last change which we must note in the habits of our speech is the great extension of the passive verb, and particularly in the infinitive mood. Many infinitive phrases which were once cast in the Active have been changed to the Passive, and a lingering survival of the active formula may be observed to have a peculiar and exceptional air. We feel this in the phrase, 'The reason is not far to seek.' A more familiar example may be seen on the boards of the house agents. Some of these boards say 'House to let,' while others prefer 'House to be let,'—the one is homely and native English, the other is modish and reminds us of the schoolmaster. The same authority will guide us to bring our Legend up to date, and stamp our version with the mint of the nineteenth century, thus: 'Alfred ordered me to be made.'

In the above analysis it has been necessary

to depart in some measure from the course of nature by exhibiting in succession a group of changes which are due to processes more or less simultaneous. This accumulation of gradual changes furnishes a measure, partly scientific, partly sentimental, of the wide interval that separates us from the time when this Epigraph was curiously woven in golden filigree by the lucky artist who executed the design of the ingenious prince.

But the Epigraph has time-indications which are closer and more definite. There are features which, besides telling of the lapse of time, do also in some sense indicate the point of time; features in virtue of which this Legend may be said to suggest proximately its own date. The two words 'MEC HEHT' are archaic forms, the one of which is never, and the other rarely, found in the prose of the tenth century; indeed they were both archaic in the ninth. MEC had given place to ME, and (though less absolutely) HEHT to HÊT; but the older forms were still at the service of the poet, and Epigraphy has some share in poetic privilege. Indeed it would seem that in the time of Alfred MEC was consciously

used as an archaic curiosity. There is a gold ring which I take to be contemporaneous with our Jewel, and it bears an English inscription in which MEC occurs twice. It will be described below [1].

It would be too much to say that the forms MEC HEHT convey a definite date, but they certainly fit well with the time of Alfred, and (but for that vague licence of Epigraphy) they might even be said to suggest the ninth century as the latest probable date of a work with which they are identified.

It is worthy of notice that HEHT occurs in another piece of Alfred's inditing, which I will introduce here not only for the sake of the old reduplicative verb, but also because the passage is germane to the argument, and imports an illustration of a comprehensive kind. The king prefixed to his version of Gregory's *Pastoral Care* a preface in prose and a prologue in verse. The prose preface was about the main purpose of his work; the poetical prologue dealt with literary matters, the authority of his text, the history of his copy, the

[1] Chapter x.

manner of his own literary operation. It is this poetical and literary Prologue which I here quote:

Þis ærendgewrit	This Epistle
Agustinus	Augustine
ofer sealtne sæ	over salt sea
suan brohte	brought from the south
ieg-buendum,	to us island-dwellers,
swa hit ær fore	just as it erst
adihtode	indited had been
drihtnes cempa	by Christ's doughty champion
Rome papa.	the pontiff of Rome.
Ryhtspell monig	Much rightful discourse
Gregorius gleawmôd	did Gregory's glowing wit
gind wôd	give forth apace
ðurh sefan snyttro,	with skilful soul,
searoðonca hord.	a hoard of studious thought.
Forðæm he monncynnes	Wherefore he of mankind
mæst gestriende	converted the most
rodra wearde:	to the Ruler of heaven:
Romwara betest,	he of Romans the best,

monna môdwelegost,	of men the most mind-rich,
mærðum gefrægost.	and widest admired.
Siððan min on Englisc	At length into English
Ælfred kyning	Alfred the king
awende worda gehwelc,	every word of me wended,
and me his writerum	and me to his writers
sende suð and norð;	south and north he did send;
heht him swelcra ma	more ordered of such
brengan bi ðære bisene,	by the copy to bring,
ðæt he his biscepum	that he to his bishops
sendan meahte:	might be able to send:
forðæm hi his sume ðorften,	for some of them needed it,
ða ðe Lædenspræce	such as of Latin
læste cûðon.	very little did know.

In the last six lines of this little poem a new attitude is taken up; the book itself becomes the speaker, and sets forth how ÆLFRED was the translator, how he ordered (HEHT) more copies of his translation to be made, and for what purpose. In mentioning purpose, the prologue communicates

something beyond the Legend, which leaves the purpose and signification of the design shrouded in symbolism. But for the rest, if we analyze these six lines, we shall find the heart and core of them to be essentially identical with the Legend on the Jewel—

AELFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN

CHAPTER III

EARLY SPECULATIONS ABOUT ITS DESIGN AND MANNER OF USE

The finding of the Alfred Jewel chanced upon a remarkable time in the intellectual life of the English nation. It was the time of Dryden, Defoe, Swift, Christopher Wren, Bentley, Lord Somers, Sir Isaac Newton, Addison. In literature the coming man was Alexander Pope.

The cardinal event of that period was the institution of the Royal Society in 1660, the year of the Restoration. The most conspicuous bent of the intellectual world was in the direction of physical science, and 'the great work of interpreting nature was performed by the English of that age as it had never before been performed in any age by any nation[1].' This was the

[1] Macaulay, *History*, c. iii.

period in which a national Observatory was established at Greenwich (1676). To this period belong the chemical discoveries of Boyle, the botanical researches of Sloane, and the classifications of Ray. In every department of knowledge enquiry was roused, and with it the genius of theory, whose movements were sometimes hasty and erratic. But this tendency was gradually counteracted by the deepening conviction that sound knowledge must be based on careful observation, and the need of museums began to be recognized. The Ashmolean Museum was built by the University of Oxford, in 1683, to receive Elias Ashmole's collection of curiosities, the formation of which had originated with the Tradescants. The architect was Sir Christopher Wren. Altogether it was a time of new ideas and new institutions.

When the Jewel was found, in 1693, it fell into the hands of persons who belonged both socially and intellectually to the foremost ranks. The first recorded owner was Colonel Nathaniel Palmer, of Fairfield House, in the region of the Quantocks. Of this house and this family some particulars will be related in the ninth chapter.

The first notice of the Jewel was published by Dr. Hans Sloane, a Fellow of the Royal Society, eminent as physician, natural philosopher, and antiquarian. He was elected Secretary of that Society in 1693, the year in which the Jewel was found. Whether by reason of the new cloud of political and religious trouble which brooded over the land in the latter years of James II, or from whatever cause, so it was that the *Philosophical Transactions* had been suspended for the past six years, and they were resuscitated by the new Secretary, who was himself an active contributor. This remarkable man lived to a great age, and when he died, in 1752, in his ninety-second year, his museum was bought by the Government, and this purchase was the origin of the British Museum; for until the middle of the eighteenth century the idea of a national library and museum had never been entertained in England.

The same Act of Parliament (26 Geo. II) which directed the purchase of the Sloane museum also directed the purchase of the Harleian collection of manuscripts which had been made by Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford, whose

name is also memorable in the study of the Alfred Jewel; for it was from an engraving furnished by Robert Harley, and made from a drawing of his own, that the first of the three figures in Hickes's *Dissertatio Epistolaris* was printed.

The first published notice of the Jewel appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions* (No. 247 in 1698), and it was contributed by Dr. William Musgrave, Fellow of New College, physician in London, and an active member of the Royal Society, and author (1709) of *Antiquitates Britanno-Belgicæ*. He also contributed to Hickes's *Thesaurus* the second and third figures of the Jewel which are there engraved [1].

These were the eminent persons who prepared the material for the elaborate account which Hickes (1705) gave of the Alfred Jewel in the first volume of his *Thesaurus*. For the minutiæ of the description he was particularly indebted to Harley and Musgrave, who appear to have been occasional visitors at Fairfield House.

The first impression which prevailed as to its design and use was that it might be an amulet. This was Dr. Musgrave's first opinion. But

[1] Appendix A.

afterwards he followed Hickes in supposing it was a pendant to a chain or collar of state, and Hickes even says (but here he must be simply repeating the expressions of his informants) that the cross-pin in the socket seems adapted to such a use.

The boar's snout is developed into a tubular ending which furnishes a socket with a cross-pin, manifestly asking a peg or (as artisans speak) a stert; and when this observation was maturely appreciated, it generated two inferences: (1) that there was no provision for attachment answering to the above theory; and (2) that in the position imagined, the picture would hang upside down.

These criticisms opened the way for new observations and new conjectures. The antiquary Hearne interpreted the Jewel as if it were designed to be fixed at the extremity of a roller on which a manuscript was rolled, as a suitable ornament for some ceremonious presentation. But this hypothesis neglected the fact that the Jewel is made with an obverse and a reverse, a front and a back, which renders it quite unfit for such a position as Hearne had assigned to it.

By Francis Wise and Samuel Pegge, chief antiquarians of the eighteenth century, it was imagined that our Jewel might have adorned the top of a stilus or ancient pen for writing upon a waxen tablet. In refutation of this theory it sufficed to observe how awkward and unwieldy an ornament it would prove to the penman.

Nevertheless, this idea had a career, winning a momentary plausibility from the assumption that Alfred's 'æstel' was a stylus. In *Archæologia* ii there is a letter signed 'S. Pegge,' from which I extract the following:—

'It is not certainly known to what use this valuable curiosity . . . might be put: but among other conjectures Mr. Wise imagines, and very probably, it might have been the handle of a stylus. And if one should say it was one of those styli which the king sent along with his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral*, it would be no great absurdity. . . . It may here be alleged that the king sent his present to the cathedral churches: but, with submission, this does not imply that he might not also send the like to the two monasteries of his own foundation, this of Athelney and the other at Shaftesbury; it is

most probable he would send a book and a stylus to both those places, and if he did, this jewel in my opinion bids fair to be the handle or upper part of the stylus which was presented by him to the House of Athelney where it was found.'

Collinson, the historian of Somersetshire (1791), in a passage to be quoted below (chapter ix), designates it an amulet, and this was probably the way in which it was usually regarded in the eighteenth century. To this Pegge (in the article cited above) objected as follows: 'Dr. Musgrave once thought it might be an Amulet, but Alfred never ran (that we know of) into such vanities.'

Passing now to the nineteenth century, Mr. Philip Duncan, in his Catalogue of the Ashmolean Museum, advanced the theory that it might have been mounted on the top of a staff (after the manner of a Roman eagle), and that it was carried into battle as a standard to animate the courage of warriors. This exquisite bijou, of materials so brittle as enamel and crystal, cased in a delicate web of golden filigree, looks strangely inappropriate for the

fury of battle and the interchange of hard knocks.

And indeed this theory was never suggested to its author by the reason or probability of the thing, but by certain texts which at that time were in better esteem than they are now, especially the hagiography of St. Neot, wherein it was said of this saint that he went before the king in war, carrying a palm and guiding him to victory, to all which the palm-bearing figure in the Enamel seemed to correspond. And this also explains why that figure was supposed to represent St. Neot.

In like manner, Hickes was carried away by a passage in pseudo-Ingulph to abandon his first and best interpretation of the enamelled Figure, and to adopt the idea that it may have been intended to represent St. Cuthbert [1].

All these speculations on the design and use of the Jewel are unsatisfactory and, considering the eminence and ability of the propounders, strangely poor in the craft of interpretation. If this surprizes us in an age when the minds of men were so much awakened, we should

remember that the new movement was chiefly in the direction of physical science, and that little progress had as yet been made in the analysis of human history and the science of historical criticism.

From these abortive attempts at interpretation, we gather that this singularly elaborate phenomenon of a Jewel had the effect of setting curiosity and imagination awork in the minds of those who contemplated it, and that some theory, however precipitate, became a sort of necessity. To this category must be added a more recent conjecture, which, as it proceeded from a highly honoured source, as it was persistently and circumstantially argued out, and as it has been widely accepted, demands a chapter by itself.

CHAPTER IV

BISHOP CLIFFORD'S THEORY [1]

The theories about the Alfred Jewel which have been noticed hitherto, belong to the crude attempts at interpretation which were evoked by the surprize of the strange discovery in the last decade of the seventeenth century. We come now to a new theory which was broached in our own time by Bishop Clifford, in his Inaugural Address as President of the Somersetshire Archæological Society in 1877, when the Annual Meeting of that Society was held at Bridgwater.

This theory demands a fuller attention than any

[1] William Joseph Hugh Clifford, second son of the seventh Baron Clifford of Chudleigh, was the Roman Catholic bishop of Clifton from 1857 to 1888. He was a member of the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society, and for many years a constant attendant at the yearly meetings. In 1877 he was President of the Society. His obituary, by Canon Holmes, is in vol. xxxix of the Society's Proceedings.

of the foregoing, first, because it bears manifest tokens of maturer thought, but further, because there is much curious material woven into its fabric, which gives it independent value. If only for the single fact that it introduces a new explanation of the problematic 'æstel,' it ought to quicken the interest of every reader. It will be better on all accounts that the ideas of the author be presented in his own words:

Amongst the articles of church furniture used in the middle ages, frequent mention is made of 'Baculi Cantorum,' or choir staves. In the year 1222 there were eight such staves in the treasury of Salisbury Cathedral. 'The staves at Canterbury Cathedral (writes Dr. Rock, *Church of our Fathers*, vol. ii) were as rich as they were curious, in the year 1315.' He gives a list of them, and among them are 'IV baculi de cornu, cum capitibus eburneis'—four staves of horn with ivory handles; others were adorned with gold and silver and precious stones. The use of these staves was to enable the Cantor or master of the choir to point out to the singers and to the readers their places in the book, and so prevent the manuscripts and their illuminations being soiled by the touch of fingers. When the lessons were read, the choirmaster not only pointed out the spot where the lesson commenced, but handed, if necessary, the staff to the lector, that he might use it to guide his eye along the lines in reading. This precaution was not only observed with regard to those beautifully illuminated volumes used for the church services,

but was equally, if not more so, required in the case of books which were intended for the use of the general public. Most readers required to use their fingers to assist their eyes in following the lines, a practice which, if allowed, would not only soil the manuscripts, but in course of time obliterate them. Therefore when books were intended for public use it was customary to place by them a small staff or pointer for the use of the reader, even as in modern days a paper-knife forms one of the ordinary articles of furniture on a library table. In many instances these little staves or pointers were inserted in the binding of the books themselves, something after the fashion in which pencils are inserted in modern pocket-books.

I may seem to be widely departing from Alfred and from Athelney, but you will soon perceive the pertinency of these remarks. Alfred, as you know, did much to encourage learning amongst his subjects, and he was especially anxious that useful works should be translated into English, and copies of them be arranged in public places, where all might gain access to them and read them.

To encourage this good and noble work by his example he became himself an author. And he thus describes, in the preface which he wrote to the book he translated, the steps he took to start what I may call the first public reading in England:—'When I reflected,' he says, 'how the knowledge of the Latin tongue had fallen away throughout England, though many still knew how to read English writing, I began in the midst of divers and manifold affairs of this kingdom to turn into English this book (of St. Gregory the Great) which in Latin is named *Pastoralis*, and in English, *The Herdsman's Book*; sometimes word for word, and sometimes

sense for sense, even as I had been taught by Plegmund my Archbishop, and Asser my Bishop, and Grimbald my Mass-Priest, and John my Mass-Priest. After I had learned of them how I might best understand it, I turned it into English. And I will send a copy to every bishop's see in my kingdom, and in each book there is an aestel (i.e. a staff) of (the value of) 50 mancusses; and I command, in God's name, that no man take the staff from the book, nor the book from the minster, seeing that we know not how long there shall be such learned bishops, as now, thank God, there be. Therefore I command that these remain always in their places, unless the bishop have them with him either to lend somewhere, or to have other copies made from them.'

Here, then, we have the explanation of Alfred's gem. It is the handle of a book-staff or pointer which, like those at Canterbury, and elsewhere, was made of horn (which has perished), the handle itself being of precious and durable materials. The inscription on it bears witness that it was made by Alfred's order, 'Aelfred had me worked;' and this circumstance, taken in conjunction with the costliness of its material and the beauty of its execution, makes it in the highest degree probable that it is one of those aestels which Alfred says were worked by his order, and inserted in the presentation copies of his translation of *The Herdsman's Book*, and which were valued at 50 mancusses, or (taking the value of the mancus at 7*s.* 6*d.*) £18 15*s.*, a large sum for those days.

But if so, how came this gem to be found in this neighbourhood? Alfred presented one to each bishop's see in his kingdom, and there was no bishop's see in those days in these parts nearer than Sherborne, in Dorsetshire. You will

have remarked that Alfred in his preface mentions four persons who assisted him in translating the book: Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury; Asser, Bishop of Sherborne; the Priest Grimbald, who presided over the school which Alfred had founded for the training of the English youth; and the Priest John, who was placed by Alfred as abbot over the monastery which he founded at Athelney. Copies of the book, each having a book-staff, were sent to Plegmund and Asser, for they both were bishops. Can there be any reasonable doubt that this mark of attention was equally observed in the case of the other two collaborators? More especially as Grimbald was at the head of Alfred's school, and it was in order to promote English reading that Alfred had undertaken the translation of the book, and John, though not a bishop, was abbot over the monastery which Alfred himself had built in gratitude to God for the victory he had gained. A copy of the book, with the costly aestel in it, was no doubt sent by Alfred to his friend John, at Athelney, as well as to the other three collaborators. The book and the staff were, agreeably to Alfred's order, preserved in the minster, till, in the days of trouble, (probably at the dissolution of the monastery,) both were hidden out of sight, and for that purpose buried in the grounds of some neighbouring friend at Newton Park, in the hopes of recovering them in better days. As time passed on, the secret of the place where they were hidden died with the man who had hidden them; and when after many years chance revealed the place of the deposit, the book itself and the perishable portion of the staff had rotted away, leaving only the gold and crystal handle, with the words, 'Aelfred had me worked,' to tell the tale. This I believe to be the true history of Alfred's gem.

When I visited the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, in the month of July, I was shown by the courteous Curator, by the side of Alfred's jewel, a smaller specimen of ancient goldsmith's work which was dug up a few years ago at Minster Lovel, in Oxfordshire, on the site of an ancient abbey. It is smaller than Alfred's gem, but, like the latter, it is evidently the handle of a reading-staff. The handle of Alfred's staff was made of a size that might be conveniently grasped in the hand; the one from Minster Lovel was intended to be held between the finger and thumb. It is smaller and less costly, but the workmanship of the gold is so like the larger one of Alfred as almost to suggest its being the work of the same man.

Thus Bp. Clifford would fain persuade us to see in our Jewel the costly handle of a pointing stave. This satisfies the requirement of the socket and rivet, which is a fit provision for the insertion of a fine stave. The only question at this point that could be raised in opposition is, whether the socket is not too small to admit a stave of useful thickness for the purpose contemplated. And as the author of this theory has applied it equally to the Minster Lovel jewel, this objection gains in force, as the rod that could be inserted in that little jewel would be of very doubtful service as a pointer.

But when we consider the common elements in the design and workmanship of these two jewels, we are compelled to reject the theory that they were intended as handles to pointers. And first of the design. Both of these jewels have an obverse and a reverse, which in such an instrument would not only be unnecessary and unmeaning, but absolutely inconvenient and detrimental. Both of them are obviously designed to gratify the eye; as objects to be displayed in positions which they are to adorn and beautify. The Alfred Jewel contains the picture of a man in enamel, framed in golden filigree, glazed with crystal, and backed with a plate of gold curiously engraved; the whole composition plainly dictates which side is to be foremost and which end is to be uppermost when it is fixed in the position for which it is intended. Bp. Clifford's theory cannot be accommodated to these conditions.

So much for the design: now as to the materials and workmanship. In both of these jewels the outer surface is filigree work of very fine texture; can it be imagined that this agrees with the suggested use of a handle to

a choirmaster's wand, whether we consider the implied defacement of the finest goldsmith's work, or the galling friction to the musician's hand?

But besides appropriateness of design and workmanship, there is yet another condition to be satisfied, and one which this theory can only meet by means of a roundabout and arbitrary hypothesis. Any interpretation of the Jewel, to be satisfactory, must harmonize naturally and spontaneously with the Alfredian associations of the spot on which it was found. Bp. Clifford has felt this, and he has employed an elaborate machinery to meet it. The place of the find is one that naturally suggests direct and immediate connexion with the goings and comings of the king himself, for it lies near the centre of that region in which he spent some months of acute effort in the most critical juncture of his diversified and adventurous life. If our interpretation harmonize with the associations which are linked to the spot, and through the spot to the Jewel, probability is strengthened while the interest is heightened; but what possibility is there of bringing these

associations to bear upon a costly book-pointer? If anything so extravagant existed, it might be preserved in the treasury of the minster or in the book-room of the cloister; but it could have no place about the person of a fugitive king and a struggling warrior. Accordingly the author of this theory is compelled to detach the interpretation from the personal history of the king, and to rest his solution of the problem upon a highly speculative assumption combined with the chances and vicissitudes of a later age.

The author of this theory has to face the inevitable question—On the supposition that the Alfred Jewel is the handle of a book-pointer, how do you account for its being found in the neighbourhood of Athelney? In preparing to answer this question, he fetches a wide compass, enclosing in his sweep the literary achievements of the king, and seven centuries of the after-time. He begins by recalling Alfred's acknowledgements to Plegmund, Asser, Grimbald, and John, for their help in his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, and he recites the king's statement that he would send a copy of

the translation to each bishop's see, and with each book an 'æstel' worth 50 mancusses. It is an essential part of his theory that the 'æstel' was a book-pointer with a costly handle, and moreover that the Alfred Jewel was one of these handles. But there was no bishop's see at or near Athelney, the nearest being at Sherborne: how then did this relic find its way to Newton Park by Athelney? The answer is that John the Priest became abbot of Alfred's foundation at Athelney, and that there can be no reasonable doubt that Alfred gave the book and 'æstel' not only to Plegmund and Asser, but that he also extended his bounty to Grimbald and John, his two other collaborators[1]. So the Alfred Jewel having thus arrived at Athelney as the handle of a book-pointer, was religiously preserved there until the time of Henry VIII, when it was buried to await better times, and in the course of nature forgotten. My objection to this is not that it is imaginative, but that it is ill suited to its purpose, because it is needlessly cumbrous, and

[1] This machinery for bringing the *baculus cantoris* to Athelney was first employed in the interest of the stylus theory. See S. Pegge in *Archæologia* ii, quoted above in chapter iii.

because the Jewel can be traced to Athelney by a much simpler and more obvious process.

But while I find it impossible to admit Bp. Clifford's theory as an interpretation of the Alfred Jewel, seeing that this relic absolutely refuses to be classed with the decorated handles of the *baculi cantorum*, I must add that the question of the 'æstel' stands apart. I am by no means prepared to maintain that the explanation of that problem which I have recently offered in *Alfred the Great* is preferable to Bp. Clifford's. There is a close affinity between the two explanations; they both rest upon a common basis in the ancient gloss: '*Indicatorium*, æstel.' I interpreted the *indicatorium* to be a light slab, much like a flat ruler, which was to be brought to bear across the page so as to guide the reader's eye, and perhaps furnish a rest for his fingers. The Latin term would fit a pointer as well as a flat ruler, and perhaps better. It may therefore well be that in the endeavour to interpret the Jewel, Bp. Clifford has incidentally explained that problematical object which king Alfred sent as a fitting accom-

paniment with each of the presentation copies of his version of Gregory's *Pastoral Care.* The remark that the pointer might be fitted to the volume by an arrangement like that now in common use for attaching a pencil to a note-book must, I think, be felt to add a certain persuasive concreteness to his suggestion. Only then, if the 'æstel' was a book-pointer with a costly handle, that handle was certainly not fashioned after the manner of the Alfred Jewel, or of its natural associate the minor jewel of Minster Lovel—it was not fashioned with obverse and reverse.

A subsequent interpretation by Llewellynn Jewitt, F.S.A., appeared in the *Reliquary* for October, 1879, vol. xx, p. 66:—'Many, and very curious as well as various, have been the conjectures as to the use or origin of this remarkable jewel, and of the figure intended to be represented upon it, but it is not worth while to here repeat them. The probability, to my mind, is that it simply formed the head of a sceptre, and that just possibly it might have been ultimately given by Alfred to the head of the monastery founded by himself, to be used

as a pastoral staff or staff of office, as was the crosier in later days. The design and the workmanship are of exquisite beauty, and in all respects the jewel is unsurpassed by any other existing example of Anglo-Saxon art.' Again, this interpretation, like that of Hearne and others, appears to be excluded by the formation of the Jewel with a front and a back.

By the rejection of so many hypotheses the field of choice is narrowed, and our path should be so much the clearer to find the true design and use of the Alfred Jewel.

CHAPTER V

A JEWEL IN THE CROWN

The Alfred Jewel is so made as to require a small stem or 'stert' for its fixture when in use. It tapers off to a socket, which is adapted to receive a small stem, and it is only when erected on such a stem that the Figure in enamel will appear in a natural position. How can we accommodate it with such a function as will correspond to these indications of design? Evidently not on the top of a standard-bearer's pole, nor on the top of a stilus, nor at the butt-end of a music-master's wand. It is moreover evident that the stem was a permanent fixture in the socket, for although the socket is now empty, this is due to the perishing of the stem, as appears from the fact that the cross-pin is riveted. The stem was therefore not metallic,

but of some hard organic substance, perhaps walrus ivory. Our problem then is to discover a place in which this Jewel, permanently furnished with such a stem, could be so erected as to discharge some appropriate function. That function can hardly be other than personal decoration, and the place in which it might be erected is the helmet of the warrior.

I imagine then that a hollow bead ran round the king's helmet, along the rim next the forehead, and that over the very centre of the brow there was a round orifice in the upper slope of the bead, fitted to receive the ivory stem of the Jewel, and that when fixed in this position it would have minor jewels similarly fixed on either side, but that this one would be the central piece and the richest jewel in the crown or coronet. For this magnificent Jewel would have the effect of converting the helmet into a crown, transforming the most vital piece of defensive armour into the chief of royal insignia for public occasions of state.

That the rudiment of the crown was derived from the helmet, at least among our people, seems to be indicated by the Anglo-Saxon

word that preceded 'crown,' namely, CYNE-HELM, which means Regal Helmet. This word is the only English representative of the idea before the Romanic word was domesticated among us. The term 'crown' made its entrance after the Norman Conquest, at first in its original Latin form CORONA, as may be seen in the contemporary *Chronicle of Peterborough*. Thus we read under the date 1085: Her se cyng bær his CORONA and heold his hired on Winceastre to þam Eastran, 'This year the king wore his Crown and held his Court at Winchester for the Eastertide.' But the native word was not quickly superseded. In the next annal, 1086, we are informed that the king wore his Crown three times every year:—'þriwa he bær his CYNE-HELM ælce geare.'

The explanation now offered of the use and function of the Alfred Jewel is confirmed by comparison with a minor jewel in the same glass case, which for its illustrative value has been placed by the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum near the Alfred Jewel. In workmanship it is so similar that it might well be (as Bp. Clifford said) from the hand of the same

THE MINSTER LOVEL JEWEL

maker. In design it is as much alike as it is possible for a simple and rudimentary pattern to resemble one that is highly elaborate and developed. No one can doubt that these two objects are fully analogous to each other, and that the service for which they were intended was of the same nature. This minor jewel has, like the Alfred Jewel, an obverse and a reverse; the obverse presents a Cross in opaque enamel *cloisonnée*; the reverse has a gold plate, not engraved—as in the greater work—but equally with it suggestive of the back of a framed picture which is to lean against a vertical surface of some kind. As in the other, the area of the obverse is more contracted than the reverse, and the sloping sides are covered with a delicate filigree of gold. Lastly, this also has its projecting socket, with a cross-pin in its place riveted. It is in all respects adapted to be either the front and central jewel of a minor coronet, or else a lateral and subordinate jewel in the circlet whose front place was filled by a superior piece such as the Alfred Jewel.

This minor jewel was found at Minster Lovel in Oxfordshire about the middle of the present

century. The finder brought it to a jeweller in Oxford, who, apprehending that the object was one of more than ordinary curiosity, carried it to Dr. Wilson, then President of Trinity College, an eminent archæologist, and the man who of all men in Oxford at that time was the most capable of estimating a find of this nature [1]. The interest which he took in it was shared with Dr. Griffiths, who was afterwards Warden of Wadham College, and (whether by one or both) it was presented to the Ashmolean Museum. The date of this event does not appear to be recorded, but I suppose it must have happened in the fifties.

That gold ornaments were proper for the helmet, we gather from a passage in the *Beowulf*, a poem which is now, I think, among critics of proved competency, allowed to belong to the eighth century. When Beowulf, after slaying the Dragon, lies fatally wounded, he puts off the chief pieces of his armour with the insignia

[1] Speaking of the archæologists in Oxford fifty years ago, I am not forgetting, indeed I could not forget, John Henry Parker, C.B., the guide and teacher of his time in much antiquarian knowledge of great value to the historian; more especially in whatever concerned ecclesiastical or domestic architecture. He was for many years Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum.

of royalty, and bestows them upon Wiglaf, his faithful Thane and the natural heir to his throne. In the poetic description we perceive that the insignia are largely blended with the body-armour, and that the helmet is characterized by its golden decoration:

2810
Dyde him of healse
hring gyldenne
þióden þrîst-hŷdig
þegne geseałde,
geongum gâr-wigan;
gold-fâhne helm,
beáh ond byrnan;
hêt hine brûcan well.

2810
Ungearing his neck
of the golden ring
the courageous Captain
on his Thane conferred it,
on the gallant youth;
the gold-prankt helm also,
the collar and the byrnie;
saying: 'Brook them well!'

It would be easy to collect examples from later romances, but I will add only one, taken from Laȝamon's description (A. D. 1200) of king Arthur putting his armour on:

Helm he set on hafde
hæh of stele:
þær on wes moni ȝimston,
al mid golde bigon.

Helm he set on head,
high of steel:
thereon was many a gem-stone
all encircled with gold[1].

[1] Laȝamon's *Brut*, ed. Madden, vol. ii, p. 464.

The position which I have imagined for the Alfred Jewel would represent the cumulative effect of the two chief and central gems in the Crown of Queen VICTORIA, namely, the great Sapphire of Charles II and the great Ruby of Edward the Black Prince[1].

[1] *The English Regalia*, by Cyril Davenport, p. 51.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOAR'S HEAD

THERE is a feature in the Alfred Jewel which appears to support the theory propounded in the last chapter. I mean the Boar's Head, which is so wrought into the composition of the piece as to represent a subordinate, or even a servile, relation to the saintly Figure which is seen through the window of crystal.

About the creature indicated by this head there has been some diversity of opinion. It has been spoken of as the head of a serpent, of a fish, of a dolphin, and strangest of all, it has been called the head of a griffin. Of these notions the last is the one that has been oftenest repeated, and yet it is the most absurd. No doubt the griffin has been variously described, nevertheless it is generally agreed that the head

of this fabulous animal is either that of an eagle or that of a lion.

Many years ago, as I happened, in company with Dr. Liddon, to be passing the entrance of the Ashmolean Museum—the old original building by the Sheldonian Theatre—I asked him whether he had ever seen the Alfred Jewel. He had not, and he manifested some alacrity and we went in. It was naturally my part to act the showman, and I did it with a will, which was quickened by an interested motive. I set forth all my best exegesis of every part, except one—I left the animal's head unnoticed. The old doubt about the nature of this head had been recently revived, and I lay in wait for testimony undesigned. I had the satisfaction of hearing my companion remark interrogatively, 'That appears to be a boar's head?'

Between the wild boar and the helmet there existed a close and recognized association, as is well attested by the *Beowulf*, which is our chief voice from the heroic age of Teutonic antiquity. In the course of that poem there are no less than five passages in which this habitual association of ideas stands out prominently. The first

passage is where Beowulf and his companions have reached the Danish coast and stepped ashore and parleyed with the coast-warden, and obtained his approval of their visit and his offer of guidance to Hrothgar's Court. As they set forth on their march inland, the poet notices the play of the sunlight glancing from the boar-figures on their helmets:

301	301
Gewiton him þâ fêran	Forth on the march they fared
—flota stille bâd,	—the floater reposing,
seomode on sæle,	wearing on her cable,
sîd-fæðmed scip,	the wide-bosomed ship,
on ancre fæst.	at anchor fast.
Eoferlic scionon	Boar-figures shone
ofer hleor-bergan;	over the cheek-plates;
gehroden golde	as chequered with gold
fâh and fŷr-heard	defiant and fire-hard
ferh wearde heold.	the farrow kept ward.

The second passage occurs in the course of the Lay of Hnæf, which is inserted among the festivities that follow Beowulf's success against

Grendel, as being sung by the minstrel in Hrothgar's hall. In the story of the Lay there is a fight, and that is followed by the burning of the dead, and here the poet notices the arms which are consumed with their owners. In the short quotation which follows, the coat of mail is called a sark, and the helmet is indicated by its crest, which was a boar of hard iron plated with gold:

IIII

æt þæm âde wæs
êð-gesŷne
swât-fâh syrce,
swîn eal-gylden,
eofer îren-heard.

IIII

At the place of the pile
was plain to behold
the sark blood-stained,
the gilded swine-crest,
the boar of hard iron.

The third passage presents us with an incidental description of the terrors of a hand-to-hand fight between armed champions, and it pictures a trial of strength between the tough steel of the flashing sword and the hard iron of the boar on the helmet:

1286

þonne heoru bunden
hamere geþuren,
sweord swâte fâh,
swîn ofer helme
ecgum dyhtig
andweard scîreð.

1286

When the hafted halberd
hammer-toughened,
the sword battle-spotted,
at the swine on the helmet
with urgent edge
smites importunate.

The first success of Beowulf having left an avenger alive, it becomes necessary for the hero, in pursuance of his pledged war against the monster brood, to dive all-armed to the bottom of an awful mere. In our fourth quotation he is seen arming himself and preparing to plunge into the abyss; the main pieces of his armour are described, and of his helmet it is said as follows:—

1449

ac se hwîta helm
hafelan werede,
se þe mere-grundas
mengan scolde,
sêcan sund-gebland

1449

But the burnished helmet
his head to protect,
in the murky mere
was now to be merged,
in the swirl of the swimmer

since geweorðad,
befangen frea-wrasnum
swa hine fyrn-dagum
worhte wæpna-smið,
wundrum teode
besette swîn-lîcum
þæt hine siððan nô
brond nê beado-mêcas
bîtan ne meahton.

all its sumptuous array,
fringed with lordly filigree
as in far-away days
by weapon-smith 'twas wrought,
and wondrously dight,
beset with figures swine-like
that on it ever since
no brand or blade of war
had any power to bite.

These closing lines recall the remarkable passage of Tacitus, where he says that the Æstii (Esthonians) venerate the mother of the gods, and that they wear figures of the wild boar as the emblem of her cult, and that this observance alone suffices without arms offensive or defensive to make her votary feel secure even in the midst of enemies[1].

The mother of the gods may be identified, or at least proximately equated, with FRIGE, the consort of Woden, whose name survives in

[1] 'Matrem deûm venerantur. Insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant: id pro armis omnique tutelâ securum deæ cultorem etiam inter hostes præstat.' *Germania*, 45.

the sixth day of the week, Friday, FRIGE-DÆG. A survival of her cult is seen in the festive ceremony of the Boar's Head, which is kept up in Queen's College, Oxford, adding a mystic incident to the mirth of Christmas.

> Caput apri defero,
> Reddens laudes Domino.
> The boar's head in hand bring I,
> With garlands gay and rosemary.

Our fifth example occurs in a passage eminently characteristic of the heroic age, when the institutions of monarchy rested upon the personal devotion of the thane to the king. This relation is one of great historical consequence; it was to grow into the later institution of knighthood; it had been matured by that immemorial tradition of sacred confidence and fidelity between the war-chief and his companion in arms, which is signalized by Tacitus in words familiar to the modern historian. The passage which I am about to quote exhibits this devotion in concrete act. Beowulf, the hero of the poem, has returned successful from his adventure, and he is fulfilling his first duty by rendering a

report to Hygelac his king. His speech is closing with mention of rich guerdon he had received from the king whom he had delivered, namely, Hrothgar, son of Halfdan; and then he produces the noblest of these prizes as a dutiful offering to his lord. This scene constitutes a frame to our last instance of the boar-figure as the most signal feature in a warrior's head-gear:

2145

"Swa se þeod kyning
þeawum lyfde;
nealles ic þam leanum
forloren hæfde,
mægnes mêde—
ac he me mâdmas geaf,
sunu Healfdenes,
on minne sylfes dôm;
þâ ic þê, beorn-cyning,
bringan wylle,
êstum geýwan.
Gên is eall æt þê
lissa gelong:

2145

"So in fair customs lived
the imperial king;
nor of fitting guerdon I
was aught forlorn,
of meed for service—
yea, mighty things he gave,
did Halfdan's son,
myself withal to please;
which I to thee, brave prince,
by choice do bring,
in willing homage.
All my wealth proceeds
of thy good lordship:

ic lŷt hafo
heafod-mâga,
nefne Hygelâc þec!"

nor is my lot to have
kinsman of chief account,
king Hygelac, but thee!"

Hêt þa in beran
eafor heafod-segn,
heaðo-steapne helm,
hâre byrnan,
gûð-sweord geatolic—
gyd æfter wræc:

Then bade he in to bear
the wild-boar crest,
the helm in fight so high,
the hoary mail-coat gray,
the sword seigneurial—
and he said withal:

"Mê þis hilde-sceorp
Hrôðgâr sealde,
snotra fengel . . ."

"To me this battle-harness
Hrothgar gave,
the sapient monarch" &c.

In the evidence above given we see indications that this traditional choice of the wild boar for a crest was of high antiquity, and had its origin in a religious sentiment, and our fourth passage (1449 ff.) certainly conveys the idea that the armourer who wrought at the furniture of the helmet did so with a mind still under the spell of the old persuasion that a mystic sanction clung to the figure of the wild

boar, and qualified it for its time-honoured post as guardian of the warrior's head.

In the Alfred Jewel the Boar's Head appears to discharge a double function: one subservient, as affording a base or pedestal to the frame of the sacred effigy; the other servile, as a socket for the shaft whereby the elaborate and composite design is to be fixed in its destined place.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIGURE IN ENAMEL AND THE ENGRAVED PLATE AT THE BACK OF IT

But the vital problem of the Alfred Jewel is in the enamelled Figure. Of its meaning there have been guesses and suggestions, some reasonable, some wild; M. Labarte could only say, 'it represents a figure hard to characterize.' This Figure is manifestly of a religious character, and it is the centre and focus of the whole. All the other parts are relative and subordinate to this, and the entire Jewel is in fact a setting and a shrine for this sacred object. We must endeavour to ascertain its intention and significance, but before attempting this interpretation we must consider the Enamel as a work of art.

For this venerable relic, even if regarded only in its material aspect as an ingenious

mechanical product, and as a specimen of a once flourishing art, is rare and curious to so high a degree as to confer rank upon any Museum (however otherwise rich) that is so fortunate as to possess it.

Behind the Enamel, in the position of a back-board to a picture-frame, is a separate gold plate bearing a significant device which is certainly intended as a counterpart to the Figure of the obverse. From the relation observable between these two representations we may gather a constructive inference. Thus we have three subjects for our consideration in the present chapter, and it will be convenient to give to each of them a separate section by itself. Accordingly, the plan of this chapter will be as follows:—I. The Enamel as an artistic product; II. The inward signification of the enamelled Figure, and of the Engraving at the back of it; III. A Constructive Inference.

I

The Enamel as an Artistic Product

Of enamels we may say that they are a sort of paintings or embroideries;—only not made

with liquid pigments nor with variegated threads, but with molten glass diversely tinted by means of metallic oxides[1]. On the one hand they are the precursors of our painted windows, and on the other they are the parents of the famous works of the artists of Limoges. Of this artistic industry the Alfred Jewel preserves a specimen of the rarest kind. It belongs to the type which is designated *cloisonnée*, because the outlines of the design have first been made by little slender barriers of gold which serve as fences between the colours. Into the compartments so enclosed the material of the enamel is deposited in the form of a vitreous paste, that is, glass ground to a fine powder, and mixed with the colouring material and moistened. So prepared, the work is passed into an oven, with a heat to melt the glass, but not the metal plate upon which the design has been laid. If the

[1] For the etymology: *enamel* is a compound of the simple *amel*, which is now obsolete. This was an anglicized form of French *émail*, which in Old French was *esmal*, whose cognates were Provençal *esmalt*, Spanish and Portuguese *esmalte*, Italian *smalto* (used by Dante), which, in medieval Latin, was *smaltum*. The source is Old High German **smaltjan*, our verb *to smelt*, i. e. to fuse by heat (New English Dictionary, v. AMEL).

process is successful, the work is substantially achieved when it comes out of the oven, and nothing remains to be done but the dressing and finishing of the surface. Of this *cloisonnée* type M. Labarte, in enumerating nine examples, as being the chief works of this kind now extant, gives to all of them the title 'Byzantine.'

The chief extant Monuments in Byzantine Enamel Cloisonnée, according to Labarte.

1. The celebrated crown of gold, which goes by the name of the Iron Crown, is the oldest extant jewel that is enriched with enamel. It was given to the cathedral at Monza by Theodelinda, the Lombard queen, who died in 625 [1].

2. The enamels in the altar of St. Ambrose of Milan, executed in 835, must have been executed by Greek artists, who were numerous in Italy at that time. It is to be noted that the flesh tints are rendered by opaque white.

3. The enamels in the cross called the Cross of Lothaire in the treasury of the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle, which we hold to be Byzantine work.

[1] It is figured in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, v. Crown.

4. "A jewel preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It was discovered in 1696 (*sic*), near the Abbey of Athelney, in which Alfred the Great took refuge when he was defeated by the Danes in 878. Mr. Albert Way has given a description of it, with engravings of front and back, and in section (*The Archæological Journal*, vol. ii, p. 164). The inscription AELFRED MEC HEHT GEVYRCAN (*Alfred ordonna que je fusse fait*) which stands in the thickness of the piece, is thought to leave small room for doubt as to the origin which is attributed to it. The enamel of the obverse is executed by the process of *cloisonnage*; it represents a figure hard to characterize (*il reproduit une figure dont il est difficile de déterminer le caractère*). The flesh portions are in whitish enamel; the colours employed in the drapery are pale green and ruddy brown semi-transparent; the ground is blue. The jewel terminates in the head of an animal, in golden filigree, with all the characteristics of the oriental style.

"Admitting that the inscription may apply to Alfred the Great, this jewel would not by itself be sufficient to prove that the art of enamel-

ling was practised in England in the ninth century. The inscription might have been engraved after the king had purchased it (possibly) of a merchant from the East."

5. The enamels which environ the gold crown preserved in the treasury of St. Mark's, at Venice. We see there a bust of the Emperor Leo the Philosopher (886–911), who was probably the donor of this votive crown, which was made to be suspended over an altar.

6. The enamels on a chalice in the same treasury; it appears by the inscription to have been executed for an emperor who died in 944.

7. The enamels on the reliquary of Limburg. This magnificent piece was executed before 976.

8. The enamels upon eight gold plates which were found at Nyitra, in Hungary. Seven of them are in the Museum at Pesth. These eight plates unite to form a crown, one in front and one at back, and three on either side. Each has its enamelled picture. The front piece has a portrait of Constantinus Monomachus (1042). The pieces to right and left of this represent the Empresses Theodora and Zoe; the next two on either side represent actresses; the third on

either side contains an allegorical figure of a woman, the one being Humility, with hands crossed in front, the other Truth, bearing a cross. The eighth, which is the hindmost, is circular, and represents St. Andrew[1].

9. The enamels which decorate the royal crown of Hungary, which was sent as a present to Geysa I, king of Hungary, who died in 1077.

In this list the famous 'iron' crown of Monza holds the first place, being, in fact, an ample golden fillet richly decorated with enamels, and containing within it a narrow hoop of iron, which is reputed to have been made of a nail from the Cross.

The fourth place in this catalogue is assigned by M. Labarte to the Alfred Jewel, and by this classification it is referred to a Byzantine source. But as it is plain from the matter as well as the manner of his description that his acquaintance with the Jewel is second-hand, we pass over this local element, while we accept his classification so far as it refers to structural affinities.

In the spring of 1839, during some excavations

[1] These eight plates have been reproduced by M. de Linas in his *Histoire du Travail à l'Exposition universelle de* 1867, p. 125.

in Thames Street, was discovered a fibula which happily passed straightway into the hands of Mr. Roach Smith, and he wrote a memoir upon it which may be seen in the *Archæologia* for 1840, accompanied with a splendid illustration in colour and gold. It contains a bust in cloison-work enamel, and invites comparison with our Jewel more than any of those in the above list, probably more than any other extant specimen. It is now in the British Museum. Both the figure and the filigree are of superior workmanship to the Alfred Jewel, as if it were a later and more refined product of the same school. A French critic calls it Byzantine, and assigns it to the eleventh century [1].

So far about other extant specimens of enamel *cloisonnée*. This species of enamel rises like an island out of the broad level of the enamel *champlevée*, in which the plate was prepared for the vitreous deposit by scooping the pattern upon it. To this common method belong the older and more rudimentary enamels of the British horse-gear, correctly described by Phi-

[1] *Notice des Émaux, &c., du Musée du Louvre*, par M. de Laborde, 1857, p. 99.

lostratus, who will be quoted below. To this belong also the late enamels, for which during the thirteenth century Limoges was famous.

The history of the art of enamelling is very imperfectly known, and the paucity of extant specimens makes the investigation the more difficult. The canvas upon which these pictures were laid consisted of plates of the precious metals, the smaller works being laid upon gold or silver, the larger on copper. As a natural consequence it happened that as soon as they were antiquated or had served their turn, they were lightly cast into the melting-pot, save where they were protected by some peculiar veneration.

Hence it has come to pass that a favourite art of the Dark and Middle Ages, which we have reason to believe was for centuries very prolific (until it was superseded by the increased vigour of painting and sculpture in the fourteenth century), is now represented by a few specimens only, and its history is hard to retrace. I shall make no attempt to supply this want, and shall only rehearse a few interesting facts which the present investigation has brought

to my knowledge. Origins I leave to specialists: but this I may say, that such evidence as the present enquiry has brought within the circle of my observation seems to suggest a Keltic source for the Enamel in our Jewel.

The earliest mention of enamel to which we can confidently point is found in the book of Philostratus entitled *Pictures* (Icones, Εἰκόνες). This author was a Greek rhetorician and connoisseur in Art, who came to Rome (A.D. 200) in the reign of Severus, attracted by the Court of Julia Domna, who (in the words of Gibbon) was the patroness of every art and the friend of every man of genius. In his *Icones* he makes pictures the text of his elegant and fashionable discourse. Whether his pictures were real or imaginary is a matter of no consequence to our present purpose. The picture in which we are interested is one that represents a Meet for a Boar-hunt. The writer comments upon the well-equipped company, the horses and their riders, in the splendour of their get-up for the sport, drawing special attention to the curiosity and costliness of their horse-trappings. Their bits are silvern, and their head-stalls are decorated with gold

and enamelled colours. For the production of these colours it is said that 'the barbarians who dwell in the ocean do smelt them upon heated copper, and that in cooling they do set and harden and keep the design[1].'

It has been questioned who are meant by the barbarians in the ocean. Modern French writers have generally applied it to the Gauls; but Olearius, the editor of Philostratus (1709), understood the Keltic peoples; and certainly the expression appears more applicable to the British Isles than to Gaul. Moreover, it is in Britain, and not in Gaul, that enamelled horse-trappings have been found. Some of these may be seen in the Ashmolean, and more in the British Museum.

'The antiquities discovered at Stanwick in Yorkshire, Polden Hill in Somersetshire, Saham Toney in Norfolk, Westhall in Suffolk, and at Middleby in Annandale, Scotland, which are all of Celtic workmanship, consist principally of bits and portions of horse-furniture of various

[1] Philostratus, *Icones*, i. 28:—the horsemen are described as—*ἀργυροχάλινοι καὶ στικτοὶ καὶ χρυσοῖ τὰ φάλαρα. Ταῦτά φασι τὰ χρώματα τοὺς ἐν ὠκεανῷ βαρβάρους ἐγχεῖν τῷ χαλκῷ διαπύρῳ, τὰ δὲ συνίστασθαι καὶ λιθοῦσθαι, καὶ σώζειν ἃ ἐγράφη.*

kinds which have preserved, in many cases, the enamel with which they were decorated [1].'

The Romans or Romanized populations continued the practice of this art, and from the evidence of the finds that occur from time to time it appears probable that some of the finest specimens were made in Britain. A large flat plate, representing an altar, which was found in London and is now in the British Museum, has all the appearance of being unfinished. A curious cup, which was found at Rudge in Wiltshire, has round it the names of five of the towns on the Roman Wall. And this specimen appears, by peculiarities of workmanship, to be nearly related to the beautiful vase which was found in a tumulus on the Bartlow Hills, in Essex, where it seems to have been deposited after the time of Hadrian. And if the Saxon invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries did, as it is thought, obliterate all traces of this art in the other parts of the west, this could only have had the effect of making the practice of it peculiar

[1] Augustus W. Franks, 'Vitreous Art,' p. 14 in *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*, a book which was brought out in connexion with the Manchester Exhibition of 1857.

to Ireland; and the Irish were not a stay-at-home race, neither did they hide their gifts from other people.

There is a Keltic aspect in the enamelled designs which was remarked by Franks, and which may have accompanied the tradition of this art even when it passed out of Keltic hands [1].

In short, all the indications which this enquiry has brought to my notice concerning the technical history of our Enamel do seem to localize it in the British Isles. At a later stage of this chapter we shall be met by evidence of a different kind, tending in the same direction.

II

The Inward Signification of the Figure, and of the Engraving at the back of it

About the signification of this Figure the conjectures have been diverse, but they have

[1] Mr. Arthur Evans recognizes a Keltic physiognomy in the eyes of the *icuncula*; but for me the eyes are as if they were not, being so much sunk out of their place, that through infirmity of sight I am unable to verify them.

all agreed in recognizing the two sceptres as the characterizing attribute. Hickes, in his first interpretation, thought that the *icuncula* represented the glorified Saviour with a lily sceptre in either hand, denoting his twofold realm of heaven and earth: or else the pontiff of Rome as his vicegerent wielding both the temporal and the spiritual power. Afterwards, however, when he had redd in pseudo-Ingulph the story of St. Cuthbert's appearance to Alfred, and had contemplated in the Lichfield Book the figure of St. Luke (seemingly, but not really two-sceptered), he was moved to think that the *icuncula* represented a saint, and was, perhaps, meant for St. Cuthbert [1].

I think Hickes was right in his first interpretation, and especially in the second member of his alternative, wherein he referred it to the pope. In the ninth century the thought of Christ was easily blended with that of his vicegerent upon earth: and it is plain that the Figure is arrayed in precisely those insignia which best represent the dominant thought of the papacy at that epoch. The two sceptres

[1] Appendix B.

aptly symbolize the claim and aspiration of the Western hierarchy during those very years which Alfred spent in Rome.

Leo IV, the pontiff who welcomed the princely boy to Rome, had already, as the organizer of victory over the Saracens, done much to prepare the exaltation of the Roman See. Many causes conspired to the same result. This was just the moment when the famous Decretals were ready to start upon their triumphant career. A first display of their working was seen in 858, when the novel solemnity of coronation was added to the consecration of Nicholas I. And, as I apprehend the course of events, this falls within the period of Alfred's sojourn at Rome.

Not long after this the surprizing spectacle was seen of the pope on horseback, and the emperor on foot walking by his side and holding his bridle as he rode. This pontiff gave commands to kings and ruled over them as lord of the whole world; and he actually realized his ambition of making all secular power subject to the papacy.

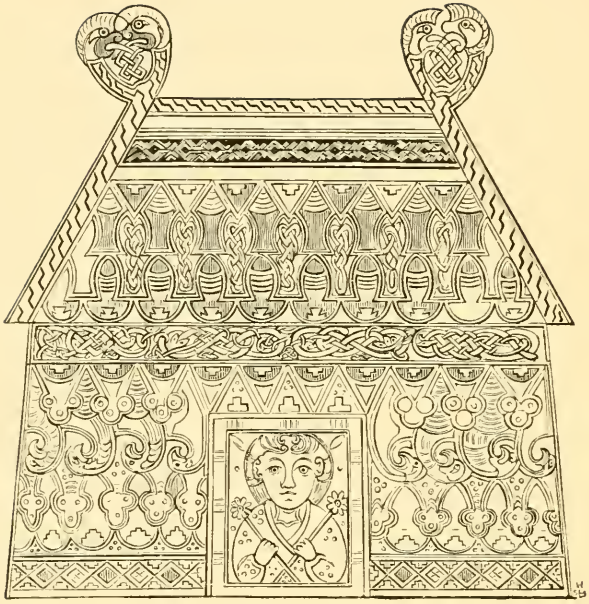
He claimed the subjection of all national churches to the bishop of Rome. He decreed,

in 866, that no archbishop might be enthroned or might consecrate the eucharist, until he had received the *pallium* from the Roman pontiff.

There was much in the conditions of the time and in his own experience to cause Alfred to view these things wholly on their favourable side. The enamelled head is probably not meant for a portrait of Leo IV or any particular pope, but we can hardly be mistaken if we interpret it as a symbolical figure to represent the papal authority as the vicar and vicegerent of Christ.

And if this be a true solution of the problematical *icuncula*, there is yet something more which we naturally desire to know. We naturally inquire about the composition of the symbol, of what elements is it made up, and from what source did the suggestion come?

In the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, is preserved a very famous book, known as the *Book of Kells*, a monument of Irish learning and art in that period when Ireland most justly earned the glorious title of 'Insula Sanctorum.' One of the full-page illuminations which adorn that book represents a scene of the Temptation, in which Jesus is on the pinnacle and Satan is



ILLUMINATION FROM THE 'BOOK OF KELLS.'

To face p. 77.]

near. Such is the action represented: but besides the action the same picture conveys also a reflection or comment upon the action. Lower down, and more in the body of the building, there is a window at which is seen a majestic personage holding a sceptre in either hand, which leans and rests on either shoulder. At first sight the effect is quaint, bizarre, and puzzling; but a little attention makes all plain. It becomes clear that a contrast is intended between the humiliation and the triumph of the Christ; and perhaps also, by the association of ideas which the last two verses of St. Matthew's Gospel have made familiar, to suggest the duty (zealously discharged by the early Irish Church) of missionary devotion. No one who has given time and thought to this picture can doubt that the two-sceptered figure is Christ. Here is no question of the pontiff of Rome. In the seventh century, to which the *Book of Kells* is assigned, the papal claims were not admitted, much less glorified, by those of the Scotian rite. Therefore the interpretation of that Irish picture is quite simple, and it represents the glorified Christ inhabiting his temple

and looking out over his Church as Lord of heaven and earth [1].

Though we know only of a single extant copy of this picture, we may confidently assume that among the manifold activities of the monks and hermits and missionaries and pilgrims from Ireland it was multiplied and disseminated. It is (I think) impossible to compare our Figure of the ninth century with that of the seventh, without coming to the conclusion that the one is a descendant of the other. We need not be incredulous about the chance of Alfred's being acquainted with Irish iconography. The narrative in the Chronicle (A. 891) of three Irish exiles who found their way to king Alfred, reflects a valuable light on his kindly relations with the learned and pious from the sister island. This connexion was neither new nor immature. When they found themselves ashore on the coast of Cornwall they set out 'at once'—such is the effect of SONA—for king Alfred [2].

Moreover, the Irish picture furnishes a wel-

[1] Appendix C.

[2] And þa comon hi ymb vii niht to londe on Cornwalum, and foron þa sona to Ælfrede cyninge.

come light upon an obscure detail of our enamelled Figure. How are the heads of the sceptres to be explained? Some have taken them for palms, and others for lilies, but the Irish drawing shows them rather as plumes. And this finds support in a singular passage of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. Speaking of Oswald the Bretwalda, Bede describes him as a prince who carefully upheld his imperial dignity, insomuch that, not only when he rode through his provinces did his standard go before him, but even when he walked forth in the streets he was always preceded by an apparitor bearing the Tufa, which (he adds) was in the vernacular called Tuuf. We learn from Du Cange that the Tufa was a wand with a head of plumes, and this is what we see in the sceptres of the Irish drawing. Sir Francis Palgrave divined that the Saxon Bretwaldadom had inherited this emblem of authority from the provincial dignitaries of the empire.

From these data the natural conclusion is that the Figure in this Jewel was derived from an Irish, and not from an Oriental, nor from any continental source. It was taken from an Irish symbolical drawing of Christ triumphant and

reigning over his Church, and it was adapted by the king in a sense which his experience had made real and concrete and practical. As Chaucer was called 'grand translateur,' so we may call Alfred a grand adapter. Whoever has been drawn in to study both Alfred and Dante may have observed this in common to the two, that what they borrow they transfigure, their touch imparts to it the colour of their mind. King Alfred in early youth was tied by every thread of religious conviction and political interest and personal sentiment to the See of Rome, and he meant this Jewel to enshrine the frontispiece of his profession and the ensign of his creed ecclesiastical, political, and personal.

At the close of the former section I said that the conclusion there arrived at would be confirmed by another kind of evidence in the sequel. Up to that point the argument had run upon the technical aspects of our enamelled Figure, and these had seemed to indicate the British Isles as its native region. Since that stage our argument has turned upon the conception and pedigree of the device; and here again we find that an insular rather than a foreign

source is indicated. Further evidence, pointing in the same direction, will be advanced before the close of the present chapter [1].

At the back of this Enamel there is a gold plate which serves the same purpose as a back-board to a picture, and it is secured by an overlapping undulating border of gold. In the Minster Lovel jewel this member consists of a blank gold plate, but in the Alfred Jewel this surface is occupied with an engraving which is certainly allegorical. At first sight it seems to be no more than a decorated pattern made upon the idea of a tree with branches and blossoms and fruit [2]. But upon closer inspection this tree appears to be a sword with its point buried in a human heart, and when this is discovered it becomes plain that the branches and blossoms must be allegorical.

[1] For the Irish illumination above referred to I have relied upon *Facsimiles of Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Manuscripts*. By J. O. Westwood. London, 1868. Plate XI.

[2] 'The back, or reverse, is a plate of gold lying immediately upon the back of the miniature, and this is beautifully worked in foliage.' Llewellynn Jewitt, F.S.A., in the *Reliquary* for October, 1878 : vol. xx, p. *66*.

A sword with its point planted in a human heart may mean compunction for sin and mortification of the natural man; it may also mean resignation in adversity to the overruling providence of God. Such a disposition of mind is productive of flowers and fruit, that is, of conduct which is beautiful and profitable, and (on great occasions) of action which is heroic. This mode of symbolical expression may be seen in the figure of St. Luke in St. Chad's Book at Lichfield. The Evangelist holds in his right hand a pen, the feathery part of which branches out into flowers and fruit, to signify the fruitful nature of the writings of St. Luke [1].

These are the obvious meanings of such a symbolical device, and this being so, it plainly results that the Figure and its back-plate are united by correlation of thought. The enamelled Figure is the symbol of religion in its ecclesiastical and political aspect; the engraved plate represents the inward disposition of the heart, the root and fount of personal religion. The former is of the nature of a public

[1] Here I follow the old copy of this drawing in Hickes's *Thesaurus* (1705) facing p. viij.

profession, and as such is openly displayed to view; the latter is reserved, out of sight, facing the wall.

III

A Constructive Inference

And this raises a consideration to which I invite careful attention. These two pictures, the one enamelled, the other engraved, are complementary the one to the other; they are two parts of one design, and as such they combine to declare the unity of thought which locks together the composition and fabric of this Jewel into one constructive whole. And this observation, once verified and clearly apprehended, must henceforth exclude the theory of Sir Francis Palgrave which explained this Jewel as being derived from two diverse sources in the following manner:—

'Alfred's Jewel, in the mechanical workmanship of the metallic portion, offers a close resemblance to the Icelandic ornaments, now made in the island, where the mode has probably continued by usage from the most remote

periods. The enamel within, on the other hand, resembles some ornaments of the Carlovingian era now existing on the continent, which have been generally considered as Oriental. The head at the extremity of the ornament is extremely like what is found in those architectural ornaments usually called Saxon, e. g. the porch of St. Margaret's at York. Whether St. Neot be the personage represented in the enamel I rather doubt; and I think it possible that the enamel itself was brought from the continent, and that the setting only was made in England. This would reconcile the two styles of workmanship; the metallic portion is unquestionably Anglo-Saxon, the enamel may be supposed to be from another country. But altogether it is one of the most curious relics of the kind; and no one, taking all the points of evidence together, can reasonably doubt but that it did belong to king Alfred.'

This is copied from the Ashmolean Catalogue, 1836 (p. 138), the work of Mr. Philip Duncan, or rather perhaps of the two brothers, John and Philip Duncan, both Fellows of New College, and successively Keepers of the Ashmolean

Museum, men famous in their generation for their zeal in promoting all that was good and generous and beautiful; and graced, both of them, with a strong and manly beauty worthy to support the nobility of their character and set it forth to the best advantage.

I take the above to be an extract from a letter to one of the brothers in answer to enquiries addressed to Sir Francis Palgrave, asking his opinion about the Jewel, and especially whether he thought the evidence warranted the conclusion that it had really belonged to the great king of Wessex. The answer has a peculiar value, because of the firm judgement it supplies upon the main problem. The deliberate opinion of the most competent authority of the time upon this point is of permanent value. Of a different nature is the other part of his answer, in which he embarked upon a bold antiquarian diagnosis, and broached his dualistic theory. This solution was accepted at the time as furnishing a solid basis for the interpretation of the Jewel, and it has held its ground ever since.

This new hypothesis gave satisfaction on three grounds: first, in that it accounted for the

quaintness of the Figure as being probably Byzantine or Oriental; secondly, in that it lightened the burden of credit demanded for our insular jewellers of the ninth century; and thirdly, because it squared so well with the accredited fact that Alfred did receive presents from foreign potentates. On all these grounds the dual hypothesis of Sir Francis Palgrave gave general satisfaction and seemed to be absolutely final.

For myself, I adopted it as the pivot of my interpretation, and as such I used it in the last lecture I gave on the subject, which was in May, 1899. But now at length, by the wider and more searching investigation which has been required in the preparation of this Essay, I have satisfied myself that all the parts of this composite work are bound together by a unity of thought which manifests the effort of a single mind.

All available testimony indicates that this was none other than the mind of king Alfred. In support of this broad assertion I will here bring forward a new illustration from the original writings of the king. When he had translated the *Pastoral Care* he furnished it with

a prologue and an epilogue, both in verse: the prologue is given above, in the second of these chapters; the epilogue is quoted here. It illustrates his love of figure and symbol, and his aptness for the development of a train of allegorical thought:

Ðis is nu se wæterscipe	This is now the watering
ðe us wereda God	which the world's Creator
to frofre gehêt	for refreshment promised
fold buendum.	us who till the field.
He cwæð ðæt he wolde	He said it was his will
ðæt on worulde forð	that in the world thenceforth
of ðæm innoðum	out of the inward soul
â libbendu wætru fleowen	waters aye enduring flow
ðe wel ón hine gelifden under lyfte.	of loyal believers under heaven.
Is hit lytel tweo	There is little doubt
ðæt ðæs wæterscipes	that of this watering
welsprynge is	the well-spring is
on hefonrice;	in the heavenly kingdom;
ðæt is Halig Gast.	for it is the Holy Ghost.
Ðonan hine hlodan	From that fountain fetched it
halge and gecorene,	faithful men elect,

siððan hine gierdon
ða ðe Gode herdon
ðurh halgan bêc
hider on eorðan
geond manna môd
missenlice.

and at length 'twas guided
by hearers of God
through holy books
hither on earth
men's minds to pervade
in manners diverse.

Sume hine weriað on gewitlocan
wisdomes stream welerum gehæftað
ðæt he on unnyt
ût ne to fleoweð:
ac se wæl wunað
ón weres breostum
ðurh Dryhtnes giefe
diop and stille.
Sume hine lætað
ofer landscare
riðum torinnan.
Nis ðæt rædlic ðing,
gif swa hlutor wæter
hlud and undiop

Some warily keep in memory's ward
wisdom's stream with closed lips
so that it fruitlessly
flows not away:
but the brooklet bideth
in the man's breast
through divine grace
deep and still.
Some let it at large
over the land
in rillets wide-running.
Good rede is it not
if water so lucid
run shallow and loud

tofloweð æfter foldum
oð hit to fenne werð.

Ac hladað iow nu drincan
nu iow Dryhten
geaf ðæt iow Gregorius
gegiered hafað
to durum iowrum
Dryhtnes welle.
Fylle nu his fætels,
se ðe fæstne heder
kylle brohte:
cume eft hræðe.
Gif her ðegna hwelc
ðyrelne kylle
brohte to ðys burnan,
bête hine georne,
ðylæs he forsceade
scirost wætra,
oððe him lifes drync
forloren weorðe.

flowing free over fields
and turning to fen.

But draw now for your drinking
now that your Lord
Gregorius to you gave,
and he hath guided
to your doors
the spring divine.
Fill each man now his vessel,
if sound it be,
the pail he brought:
come back for more anon.
If any lording here
a leaky pail
brought to this burn,
make boot with zealous fear,
lest he should spill
the sparkling water,
or of life's drink
depart forlorn.

The diction of alliterative poetry has fallen out of use, and consequently this illustration

must labour under the disadvantage of being in a form unfamiliar to the general reader. Nevertheless, with a little attention, the essential point will become plain. The royal translator had been refreshed and invigorated with the lucid stream of Gregory's discourse, and at the moment of parting with a beloved task he sought to relieve his full-fraught soul with a grateful burst of eulogy. Out of all the topics that were appropriate to the occasion he chose the perennial water of life promised at the well of Samaria, and upon this noble theme he expatiated with a fertility of invention which makes it the easier for us to attribute to him the rich symbolism of the Alfred Jewel.

And now to gather up the results of this chapter. We have found more than one reason to think that our Enamel was an insular, and not a continental product. This conclusion was reached by two different paths, first when we were tracing the technical history of the fabrication, and again when we were seeking the spiritual meaning of the design; by these two widely different lines of evidence we were led

severally and independently to infer a British rather than a foreign origin for the Figure [1].

This inference was further confirmed by a third evidential process, arising out of the sympathy of meaning which appears to unite the enamelled Figure with the engraved device upon its back-plate. This led us to question the long-established doctrine of duality of origin which rested upon the authority of Sir Francis Palgrave, and to infer that the whole composition of the Jewel had been projected and devised by a single mind.

Finally, we found reason to think that all these features harmonized well with the mind and character of a person with whose name the Jewel is already connected by the Epigraph; and if anything was yet wanting to complete the identification of that person, it seems to be supplied by certain traces of inward affinity between the symbolism of the Jewel and that of the epilogue to the translation of the *Pastoral Care*, one of the surest monuments of the mind of king ALFRED.

[1] Appendix D.

CHAPTER VIII

ALFRED IN SOMERSET BEYOND PEDRIDA

When we have described the form and symbolism of the Alfred Jewel, and reviewed the various interpretations which it has evoked, and when we have moreover analyzed its design and considered each several feature, we have not as yet exhausted the matter of our theme. An important part of the problem remains to be discussed, and that is the place of its discovery, the how and the why of its deposit there, and the possibility of light to be derived from the historical associations of the locality. It was found near the Isle of Athelney. This looks like a piece of circumstantial evidence tending to identify the Alfred named in the

THE ISLE OF ATHELNEY.

To face p. 92.

Epigraph, and to associate the Jewel with the chief and central episode in the career of our national hero. The momentous crisis which is thus reflected in the Jewel seems to open a wider view, and to demand some enlargement of this Essay, so as to embrace a glimpse of that eventful story.

Of all this we now, after the lapse of a thousand years, speak as men who know the sequel, and (because we do know the sequel) it is the harder for us to appreciate the intensity of that crisis. We are helped by the occurrence of an opportune discovery. Just when our nation was beginning to be ripe for historical reflection and capable of entering into the struggles of our remote forefathers, there was 'dug up' in the locality where Alfred took refuge in the year 878, a personal ornament bearing his name in impressive characters. It is to us now as if the king himself had but recently passed that way under such stress of circumstances as constrained him to hide his royal insignia, and as if we somehow by this chance were brought nearer to the burden of his lot, and were made sharers not only in the

fruits of his triumph, but also in the toil and the joy of his achievement.

* * *

By the sudden surprize with which the Danes had broken the peace and come upon him at Chippenham in the dead of winter, they had almost fulfilled their design and taken him captive. But he had fled, and they had Wessex at will, and were proceeding to divide and occupy the land. The king, with a few companions, had escaped into Selwood, and thence by wood and by fen, like hunted creatures, they eluded pursuit, but were never secure until they had passed beyond Pedrida.

What were his reflections on finding himself suddenly an outcast in the winter, a fugitive in the wild? He had experienced hair-breadth escapes, but none like this! He had trusted Guthrum's oath, had thought him in earnest this time! And even now he was loth to charge this last perfidy upon him. No! this trick was not his, it came from those buccaneers in the Severn Sea. Mad at the defeat of last summer's combined scheme, which they had come from far north to support, they had forced Guthrum's

hand, and compelled him to join them in this winter raid. And they would not stop there! Finding that he had given them the slip, they would certainly be down upon some part of the coast of Somerset or of Devon, and preparations must be made to receive them. Odda will surely be stirring: he is safe to be on the alert! I must find out what he is doing, and we must work on a plan; he in Devon, and I in Somerset!

It was now twelve years since he had come to the front, and had taken his stand by the side of his brother Æthered. The moment when he had begun to share in public affairs had coincided with a great change in the situation. That was the time when the invaders acquired a footing in East Anglia: they made there a centre of operations from which they went out and to which they came in—it had become the head quarters of an invading host which manifested a settled design of conquest. Previously the incursions of the Northmen had been desultory, but from that time they had become methodical. This change had coincided with the death of Æthelbriht in 866, and the accession of Æthered.

In the following year had died Alhstan, that vigilant patriot, the old warlike bishop of Sherborne.

Æthered and I were the two youngest of the family, and our relations had been peculiarly close. Before we were united by public cares, we had been partners in our private concerns. Our several estates had been kept in one and worked in common, under agreed conditions, so that they had remained undivided. Our names had been coupled together by the common voice of the nation. The style was ever thus:—ÆÞERED CYNING AND ÆLFRED HIS BROÞUR.

Oh what a fearful time it was for ANGEL-CYNN, that five years of Æthered's reign! Northumbria, that old imperial kingdom, was crushed; Mercia reduced to make a peace with the heathen, which was the best we could effect by marching in force to Nottingham to support Burgred and Æthelswith! And, worst of all, the East Angles defeated in battle, the good king Edmund slain (he fought like a hero, and died like a martyr); the land conquered, possessed, and turned from an Anglian into a Danish kingdom!

It was our turn next. All was at length ripe for the subjugation of Wessex, and on this aim they brought all their strength to bear. We made a gallant stand at Ashdown against overwhelming odds; we slew their kings and jarls, and made their practised braves fly before the rustic militia of Ecgberht. Eight pitched battles in that year, besides smaller fights without number. But Æthered died at Easter. Rightly the people revere him as a saint. So I was left to continue the struggle single-handed.

Since then they have established themselves in the possession of London, and they have banished Burgred and set up for king in Mercia a tool of their own; also Halfdan has abolished the kingdom of Northumbria and partitioned the land. And amidst all this, what a destruction of religious houses, seats of piety and learning and education—Lindisfarne, Wearmouth, Jarrow, York, Ripon, Bardney, Ely, Crowland, Medeshamstead, and many others.

They have destroyed the powers of Northumbria and Mercia; but there they had a point in their favour which is against them here. The Welsh at the back of those nations were

always ready to co-operate with the invader, but that is not so here in the west. The Cornish have never made common cause with the heathen since the battle of Hingston Down, in which that coalition was quashed by Ecgberht. And we have a still better guarantee in the constant policy of Wessex ever since the days of Ina and Aldhelm. The territorial quarrel was then appeased, and the religious difference too. The West Welsh were conquered, but they were never wantonly humiliated, no man was ejected from his own. They appreciated the respect and even honour that was shown to their favourite church of Glastonbury. Therefore I have good hope of the support of the men of Somerset.

True, we have to count upon the hostility of the Welsh on the opposite shore of the Severn Sea, where the Danish fleets find harbour and all friendly countenance. Still, that is not quite the same thing as having an active enemy behind your back upon the same stretch of territory. Here in this west country the people differ only in degrees of allegiance, none are actively hostile. This is the weak point in the position of the invaders. This is the one little

bit of advantage that still remains to us. I must improve it to the utmost!

But first of all we must provide against a sudden descent on the coast. For the last two years events have succeeded one another at a quickened pace: surprize on surprize! There, under the opposite coast, lies a heathen fleet, ready to be down upon us without notice! The coast-wardens must be kept up to the mark, and I not to be seen in it!

The mobility of these troopers defies calculation! How unexpected and startling was that occupation of Wareham last autumn! How daringly defiant of gods and men that breach of their most sacred oath! When by that perjury they had lulled our mistrust, they made a sudden rush for Exeter! Perfidy is part of their tactics. How wonderful, how divinely providential, that storm off Swanage, which wrecked the perfidious plan! And now, not to be baulked, they pounce upon Chippenham in time of truce and in mid-winter, thinking to capture me! How great in war is the unexpected! Without perfidy, I too must learn to meditate surprize; I must contrive how to

distract their calculations, and strike where least expected.

With some such a strain of thought as this (if I have followed him aright) now ruminated the undaunted king, in whom thought was the spring of action. Moreover, he reasoned thus with himself: 'So long as winter lasts, they cannot follow me with the host by the way that I have come, but if they learn my whereabouts, they may easily find adventurers who would undertake to kill me. Wherefore I must not make myself too freely known, but proceed cautiously, and make proof of men before I trust myself to them. To most I must appear like some mounted yeoman hunter who follows the high deer that abound in the forests about these hills. And as for this sacred toy, this personal enigma, this Jewel of ceremony, which many eyes have beheld, I must no longer carry it about me, lest peradventure it make me known unawares. I will bury it in some convenient spot!'

* * *

The western boundary of Wessex had for centuries been the Great Wood of which the

ancient name still survives as a specific element in the historic designation of Frome Selwood.

This great wood was also called Wealwudu, a very natural and appropriate name, because it had long been the barrier between the Saxon and the Welsh populations. Here lies the most fitting scene for the story of Denewulf. In the time when the king was a fugitive, he found this man keeping swine in the forest, and he discovered in him a great natural capacity and aptness for good, and after his return to power he educated Denewulf, and made him bishop of Winchester. This story does not run on all fours, because according to the best authorities Denewulf became bishop of Winchester in 879, and if he was keeping swine in 878, being already of mature age, it smacks rather of hagiology than of history. But it may be that the marvel has been enhanced in transmission; or if we choose the lowest estimate and call it mere fiction, still it is worth while observing what manner of stories were invented about king Alfred.

Behind this barrier the Danes had never been

able to get a footing. As if aware how greatly this was needed for the success of their designs upon Wessex, they had made several attempts. Two great efforts which imply this aim were made at the end of the reign of Ecgberht. The force of thirty-five ships which that king repelled at Charmouth, on the coast of Dorset, seems to indicate something more than merely a plundering incursion.

In 835, a great naval armament (*micel sciphere*) came to the Cornish coast and were joined by the West Welsh, and they gathered in force at Hingston Down, where they probably intended to fortify themselves; when Ecgberht appeared with an army, and dispersed them.

The next recorded attempt of the kind was in the year 845, in the reign of Æthelwulf, when the Wicengas entered the mouth of the Parret, and were met by the posse comitatus of the two shires, Somerset and Dorset, under their two ealdormen, and Alhstan the warlike bishop of Sherborne.

Only in the very last year (877) their land-force had, by a perfidious surprize, seized Exeter,

acting in concert with a fleet of one hundred and twenty ships, which were to sail up the Exe and co-operate with them — but they were wrecked in a storm off Swanage [1]. This disaster, combined with the promptitude of the king in assault, had compelled them to capitulate, and had dislodged them from Exeter.

Of the same nature and motive was the attempt of this spring on the coast of Devon at a place which Asser calls Cynwit, with a force of twenty-three ships, which were wintering on the opposite coast of the Severn Sea. The repulse was complete and the blow decisive, but the name of the English leader is not given by the contemporary annalist. A hundred and twenty years later, Ethelwerd calls him Odda the ealdorman of Devonshire. The reticence of the Chronicle suggests that this achievement was conducted by Alfred while he was keeping

[1] Among promising fields of exercise in exploring the bed of the sea, there is the coast from Swanage Bay round to St. Aldhelm's Head, which might yield some durable relics from the loot of ancient monasteries. And if Alfred really did purchase the evacuation of Wareham in 877, 'pecuniam dando,' as Ethelwerd has it, the very coins may still be there, and in a good state of preservation.

in the background, lest the place of his retreat should become known.

* * *

Gradually and by the spontaneous action of natural causes, the western barrier of the Saxon was moved from the line of Selwood to the fen-land of Pedrida. This barrier was deeper bedded in the soil, was harder to pass, and has left behind it memories more indelible. The first explicit notice of this virtual transfer of the western boundary meets us seventeen years later than the epoch with which we are now engaged, and it may be worth while to go so far out of our way in order the better to realize the import of Pedrida.

In the last decade of Alfred's reign, when he was in the agony of that supreme crisis which tested the value of his institutions, a great muster of force was called for, and the extent of the contributing area is sketched by the annalist as matter of amazement. 'There gathered Æthered aldorman and Æthelm aldorman and Æthelnoth aldorman, and the king's Thanes who were then at home in the fortifications, from every garrison east of Pedrida

(whether west of Selwood or east), likewise also north of Thames and west of Severn :—moreover some part of the Welsh nation[1].'

Here we mark the startling novelty that the Welsh in 894 are seen aiding the Saxon against the Dane; and we can hardly forgo a passing cry of wonder and pleasure at this signal token of the imperial success of Alfred's policy. But our present concern is with the recognition of Pedrida as the westernmost limit of Wessex proper instead of Selwood, and the implication that the change was recent. We see that Selwoodshire (as the intervening district was popularly called) was by 894 quite assimilated and included in the military administration of Wessex, but that beyond Pedrida some other rule was operative at that time. Such a fact reflects back an illustrative light upon the year 878, and helps us to estimate the situation of Alfred when he was in Somerset beyond Pedrida.

[1] Þa gegaderode Æþered ealdormon and Æþelm ealdorman and Æþelnoþ ealdorman, and þa cinges þegnas þe þa æt ham æt þæm geweorcum wæron, of alcre byrig be eastan Pedredan, ge be westan Sealwuda ge be eastan; ge eac be norþan Temese, and be westan Sæfern, ge eac sum dæl þæs Norð Weal cynnes. *Sax. Chron.*, A. 894.

The political division here indicated has left traces which may still be recognized, particularly in the dialect and in folk-lore. Of the dialect we have a remarkable monument in Mr. Elworthy's works, *The Dialect of West Somerset*, and his *West Somerset Word-Book*. Especially to be noted is the 'u' of the West Country, which is radically one with the Welsh 'u' and with the French 'u,' while at the same time it has a very distinct local character of its own. Every Englishman who is conversant with the French language knows how hard it is to acquire the utterance of the French 'u' after the age of infancy. A like strangeness is experienced by English people born east of Pedrida, when they attempt to reproduce the western 'u.' In fact, this vowel-sound is Keltic; it is a legacy from our British predecessors.

Not that this British 'u' is absolutely confined to the western promontory: it may be occasionally heard in other parts of the country by a cultivated and observant ear. Mr. Mayhew once told me that he had heard it in the Corn Market at Oxford. But though not confined to the lands west of Pedrida, it is in a peculiar

manner concentrated there. It is chiefly in Devonshire that this peculiar vowel has wakened wider attention, but this is simply because that county has been the most frequented as a place of holiday resort.

The so-called Devonian 'u' and its contiguous sounds have been described many times from first to last, but it has been mostly in that perfunctory vein which contents the summer tourist. It is rare to catch such a plain and solid illustration as the following, which is quoted from the preface to Mr. Elworthy's *West Somerset Word-Book*:—

'I was a passive listener at Brandon's while a bonnet was being discussed, and when making the payment ventured to remark to the young lady, "You must have been a long time in London." "Oh yes, ten years; but why do you ask?" "Only for information," said I. "And did you come straight from Teignmouth?" With much surprise at my supposing she came from Devonshire, she said at length that she was a native of Newton Abbott. I could not pretend to define the precise quality of her *two*, but it was only in that one word that I recognized her locality.'

If the vocabulary of this dialect were minutely examined by a competent Welsh scholar, some British words might be detected. Among those which would deserve early attention are *plum* (soft, as a bed), *pilm* or *pillum* (dust), *welt* (to beat, thrash).

Another local characteristic of the West Welsh promontory is this, that it is the peculiar haunt of a race of whimsical or mischievous sprites called Piskies or Pixies. In South Devon and Cornwall any one whose conduct is strange and unaccountable is said to be pisky-led. This is a branch of the numerous kindred of that versatile Puck, whose memory is kept fresh by the Midsummer Night's Dream. In an Anglo-Saxon perambulation of land at Weston by Bath, we meet with a Pucan Wyl, Puck's Well [1]. The *English Dialect Dictionary* preserves the name of Aw-Puck for Will-o'-the-Wisp or *ignis fatuus*, a compound which imports that he is the most dangerous of the species. This name was current in Worcestershire, but is now obsolete [2].

[1] Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. iii, p. 423; Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, No. 814.

[2] *The English Dialect Dictionary.* Edited by Joseph

These are the more obvious extant traces of the long isolation of the trans-Pedridan world: others there are which have attracted inquiry, such as peculiar customs, implements, songs and song-tunes, which latter have been investigated by Dr. Bussell and the Rev. S. Baring-Gould.

* * *

The Somerset to which Alfred retired was widely unlike the Somerset of to-day. In this respect three points may be taken: (1) Differences in the distribution of land and water; (2) differences in the trees and woods and game; (3) differences in the political aspect of the population.

1. West Somerset was separated from East Somerset by wide inland waters: the beds of the Brue and Parret were lakes in the winter, and only passable in summer to those who knew the ground. Pedrida was regarded as a natural limit, like the sea itself, dividing nations; it was spoken of in like phraseology. Thus we read in 658 how Cenwalh warred against the

Wright, M.A., Ph.D., Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Oxford.

Welsh and drave them even unto Pedrida [1]; and, in 682, how Centwine drave the Bret-Welsh even unto the sea [2].

The cause of that expanse of water and large area of fenland happened far back beyond historical chronology, and we can only date it by using the geological method of reckoning time. Far back in the sub-glacial era a subsidence of the land took place which affected the coast of Somerset and North Devon. Proof of this is found in a submarine forest extending along the south coast of the Severn Sea, which has long been known. 'That portion of it visible at Porlock was described in 1839 by Sir Henry de la Beche, and more recently by Mr. Godwin Austen in an essay read before the Geological Society in 1865 [3].'

Subsequently the Rev. H. H. Winwood and Professor Boyd Dawkins verified the discovery by a thorough examination of the forest-bed.

[1] 658. Her Cenwalh gefeaht æt Peonnum wiþ Walas and hie gefliemde oþ Pedridan.

[2] 682. On þissum geare Centwine gefliemde Bret Wealas oþ sæ.

[3] Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, vol. xviii.

Near Minehead the forest consists of oak, ash, alder, and hazel, which grew on a blue clay. An ancient growth of oak, ash, and yew is found everywhere underneath the peat or alluvium in the Somersetshire levels. Throughout this wide area the trees were destroyed by the growth of peat, or by the deposits of the floods, except at a few isolated spots, which stand at a higher level than usual, in the great flat extending between the Polden Hills and the Quantocks. One of these oases, a little distance to the west of Middlezoy, is termed the Oaks, because those trees form a marked contrast to the prevailing elms and willows of the district. In the neighbouring ditches, that gradually cut into peat, and then into silt, prostrate oaks are very abundant [1].

Subsidence of the land at a remote geological period was the cause of the impassable state of these levels in the time of king Alfred, and the modern system of drainage which was carried out at a later date has been the cause of the improved condition which we see now, and

[1] From an Address by Professor Boyd Dawkins in the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society for the year 1872.

which has made the Vale of Taunton Dean proverbial as the Garden of England.

2. In Alfred's time the eye was greeted by a variety of trees which are not observable now. The elm predominates all over the plain. I asked the occupier of Athelney Farm about the trees on his land, and he said there was hardly anything but elm. Of other kinds he had only two ash-trees and one beech; 'but (he added) we find bog-oak in the moors, and it makes good gate-posts.' The elms have driven out both oak and ash, and whatever other sorts they touched in their 'wrastling' progress. These sombre grenadiers dress up their lines so close as to leave little room for other trees. They suck the fruitful soil more than any other tree, and they repay their costly nurture with timber of inferior value. Introduced by the Romans to serve as stakes and props in the culture of the vine, they have overrun the land like the imported rabbits in some of our colonies. In Alfred's day these hungry aliens had not yet usurped the field, and there was still room for the display of the rich variety of nature—oak, ash, beech, fir, maple, yew, sycamore, hornbeam,

holly, poplar, aspen, alder, hazel, wych-elm, apple, cherry, juniper, elder, willow, mountain ash, spindle-tree, buckthorn, hawthorn, wild plum, wild pear, service-tree, &c. But now, the fair places of the field are encumbered by the tall cousins of the nettle, and the most diversified of English counties is muffled with a monotonous shroud of outlandish and weedy growth.

In the animal world, likewise, the lapse of a thousand years has brought change. In the pastures the most frequent animal is the cow, and only on rare occasions, as we view the moors from some elevated 'tump,' have we the chance to see a little company of antlered deer careering over the open plain, clearing the rhines with an airy bound. In Alfred's time too, cow-keeping was a stock industry, and we read of the king as entertained *incognito* by one of his own cow-herds (*apud quendam suum vaccarium*).

But the proportion of wild to domesticated animals was far greater then than it is now. The whole stretch of country from Pedrida to the end of Exmoor, fifty miles long and twenty miles wide, was then almost a continuous forest, abounding with game of all kinds, but

especially with red deer, which still continues, though in diminished numbers. This noble creature is thus described by Bewick:—

'The Stag or Red Deer. This is the most beautiful animal of the deer kind. The elegance of his form, the lightness of his motions, the flexibility of his limbs, his bold, branching horns, which are annually renewed, his grandeur, strength, and swiftness, give him a decided pre-eminence over every other inhabitant of the forest[1].'

The red deer still lives and breeds along the southern coast of the Severn Sea, and this is I believe the only part of Great Britain in which this right royal animal still ranges at large in all the freedom of nature. I am informed by my friend Mr. Townshend that in Ireland they are kept as an ornament in some gentlemen's parks, but that in a free state of nature they survive only in the mountains of Killarney.

[1] *A General History of Quadrupeds. The Figures engraved on Wood by Thomas Bewick*, 1820, p. 135. In Taunton Castle, which is the home and museum of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, the form and beauty of the red deer may be contemplated in a fine specimen which is set up in the great hall, the very hall of the Bloody Assize.

Here it will be useful to read Leland's notes of travel across the lowlands of Somerset, especially as they touch some places with which we are concerned. (I quote from the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, No. xxxiii, 'Leland in Somersetshire, 1540–1542.')

'Thens to *Cury-Malet* a 3. Miles, wher is a Parke longging to *Chambernoun* of Devonshire.

I left this Parke a litle on the lift Hand, and sone after cam over a great Brook, that resith West South West, and rennith East North East into Ivel a 2. Miles above *Michelborow* by Estimation.

(Here I cam from the Hilly Ground to the Low and Marschy Ground of *Somerseteshir*.)

Thens to *North Cury* stille by low Ground aboute a 2. Miles or more. The Chirch of *Welles* hath fair Landes here.

And hereabout is *Stoke Gregory*, wher the Chirch of *Welles* hath Possessions.

Thens about a Mile to the Ripe of *Thone* Ryver, by the which I passed by the space of half a Mile, and then I went over *Thone* by a Wood Bridge.

Athelney lyith half a Mile lower on *Thon*, and ther is a Bridge of Wood to entre thabbay [1], and beneth that almost at the very Confluence of *Thone* and *Ivel* is another Wood Bridge over *Thone*.

Thonetoun alias *Tawntoun* is a 5. Miles by South West from *Athelney*.

[1] Appendix E.

Ther is a great Bridge on *Thone* at *Basford* a Mile lower then *Thonetoun*.

From this Brdge by *Athelney* I rode by a low Marsch Ground a 2. Miles to *Pedertun Park*.

Here at *Pederton* the soyle Westward and South West rysith agayn and ys not fenny.

There ys a great Numbre of Dere longging to this Park, yet hath it almost no other Enclosure but Dikes to let the Catelle of the Commune to cum yn.

The Dere trippe over these Dikes and feede al about the Fennes, and resort to the Park agayn. There is a praty Lodge moted yn the Parke.

There cummith a praty Broke thorough the Park, and half a Mile beneth the Park it goith ynto *Ivel*.

This Brooke is caullid *Peder*, and risith West South West yn the Hylles aboute a 2. Myles of. First it cummith by *Noth Pedreton*, a praty uplandisch Toun, wher is a fair Chirch, the Personage whereof was impropriate to *Mynchin bocland*.

Then it touchith on *South Pederton*, in the which Paroch the Parke standith, and so to the Ryver of *Ivel*.

From the Lodge in *Pederton* Parke to Northpedertun a Mile.

From *Northpedertun* to *Bridgewater* 2. Miles. The way or I cam ynto *Bridgwater* was caused with Stone more then half a Myle.

Here we may observe that Leland appears to know of no river Parret; to him it was 'Ivel.' It would be curious to learn when and how a minor tributary gave its name of Parret to the

lower waters of the Ivel. It may be surmised that Pedrida was never the name of a river, but of a belt of country, and that it may have meant 'the passage or ford of the Peder,' Leland's 'praty broke.' The name seems to contain the Welsh *rhyd*, a ford. At first it may have denoted the ford of the Peder, and then by natural extension it may have come to designate the whole fenland of the lower Ivel.

3. Racial differences were still seen and felt. The West Welsh had been conquered, and were now living in peaceful subjection, and forming an outlying part of the kingdom of Wessex; but still they were imperfectly assimilated.

The old internecine quarrel between the races had in this western land been hushed and calmed; and on no other border were the British living and mingling with their conquerors on such amicable terms. There was a very great difference between the disposition of the West Welsh towards the Saxon and that of the 'North Welsh' on the opposite coast of the Severn Sea.

These pacific relations were not of recent date; they appear as a deliberate policy in the reign of Ina before the end of the seventh

century, and even earlier indications of this tendency may be gleaned which carry us back two hundred years behind the reign of Alfred.

When in *665*, Wina[1], bishop of Winchester, consecrated Ceadda (St. Chad), he had with him two British bishops as his assistants. These two bishops must have belonged to the West Welsh. Further, there is reason to believe that Ceadwalla, though descended from Cerdic, and king of Wessex, was half a Briton. Again: the legendary tales about Ina's legislation which are embodied in the so-called Laws of Edward the Confessor, however unhistorical, have possibly a traditional value as characterizing the attitude of Wessex towards her British subjects in the seventh and eighth centuries. In this apocryphal text it is said that by Ina's enactment 'the British were declared politically equal with the English, and that as he himself had set the example of a Welsh marriage, so he would that connubium between the two races should

[1] The West Saxon form of this name was Wine, but I write it Wina, as also I adopt the Latin form Ina, in place of the genuine Ine, lest the English reader should allow it to pass through his mind in the shape of a monosyllable. The Anglian forms of these names (in Bede) are Ini and Wini.

be legally recognized.' These are distorted reminiscences of the historical fact that Ina maintained a conciliatory policy towards the conquered British, and in this course he was well supported or perhaps guided by Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, who in 704 was requested by a synod to write a letter to Gerontius (Geraint), king of Damnonia, and exhort him and his people to conformity with Catholic usage in the time of keeping the Easter festival. The letter was sent, and it is still extant. It is addressed, in respectful and courteous language—'To the most glorious prince, swaying the sceptre of the Western realm, whom I, the searcher of the heart is my witness, do embrace with brotherly charity—to king Geraint and to all God's priests dwelling in Damnonia, Aldhelm, &c.[1]'

And when, shortly afterwards, Hædde, bishop of Winchester, died, and the moment had arrived for the long-contemplated division of the vast

[1] 'Domino gloriosissimo occidentalis regni sceptra gubernanti, quem ego, ut mihi scrutator cordis et rerum testis est, fraterna caritate amplector, Gerontio Regi simulque cunctis Dei sacerdotibus per Domnoniam conversantibus, Althelmus, &c.' Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. iii, p. 268.

diocese of Wessex, Aldhelm became bishop 'to the west of the wood,' over a province which (as Ethelwerd tells us) was commonly called Selwoodshire. Aldhelm died in 709 upon one of his episcopal journeys, at the village of Doulting on the western brow of Mendip, between Wells and Frome. His memory has been locally revived in the present century by the discovery of a small Saxon church in Bradford-on-Avon, which has been identified by competent judges with the *ecclesiola* which William of Malmesbury says that Aldhelm built in that place. To him was probably due the preservation of the British monastery at Glastonbury and its endowment by king Ina.

That spot was dear to the British patriot as the mysterious sojourn of their hero, who in due time was to return and revive the ancient glory of the British name. The extant books in which this legend is recorded are later than the time of Alfred, but the romance itself is of the sixth century. Our oldest English form of it is of about A.D. 1200.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

(From Laȝamon's *Brut*, line 28,582.)

Arthur wes forwunded
wunderliche swithe.
Ther to him com a cnaue,
the wes of his cunne;
he wes Cadores sune,
the eorles of Cornwaile.
Constantin hehte the cnaue;
he wes than kinge deore.
Arthur him lokede on,
ther he lai on folden,
and thas word seide,
mid sorhfulle heorte:
Constantin thu art wilcume,
thu weore Cadores sune;
ich the bitache here,
mine kineriche:

* * *

And ich wulle uaren to Aualun,
to uairest alre maidene;
to Argante there quene,

Arthur was wounded
very dangerously.
There to him came a youth
who was of his kin;
he was son of Cador,
the earl of Cornwall.
Constantine hight the youth;
to the king he was dear.
Arthur looked upon him,
where he lay on the ground,
and these words said,
with sorrowful heart:
Constantine thou art welcome,
thou wert Cador's son;
I here commit to thee,
my kingdom:

* * *

And I will fare to Avalon,
to the fairest of all maidens;
to Argante the queen,

aluen swithe sccone :
and heo scal mine wunden
makien alle isunde ;
al hal me makien,
mid haleweiȝe drenchen.
And seothe ich cumen wulle
to mine kineriche :
and wunien mid Brutten,
mid muchelere wunne.

Æfne than worden,
ther com of se wenden,
that wes an sceort bat lithen,
sceouen mid vthen :
and twa wimmen therinne,
wunderliche idihte :
and heo nomen Arthur anan,
and aneouste hine uereden,
and softe hine adun leiden,
and forth gunnen hine lithen.

Tha wes hit iwurthen,
that Merlin seide whilen :
that weore unimete care,

elf exceeding sheen ;
and she shall my wounds
make all sound ;
all whole me make,
with healing drinks.
And sith return I will
to my kingdom :
and dwell with Britons,
with much delight.

Even with these words,
lo came from sea wending,
that was a short boat sailing,
driving with the waves :
and two women therein,
of wondrous aspect :
and they took Arthur anon,
and straight him bore away,
and softly down him laid,
and forth with him to sea
they gan to move away.

Then was it come to pass,
what Merlin said whilome :
that there should be much

curious care

of Arthures forth fare.

Bruttes ileueth 3ete,
that he beo on liue,
and wunnie in Aualun,
mid fairest alre aluen :
and lokieth euere Bruttes 3ete,
whan Arthur cume lithen.

when Arthur out of life should fare.

Britons believe yet,
that he be alive,
and dwelling in Avalon,
with the fairest of all elves ;
still look the Britons for the day
of Arthur's coming o'er the sea.

All this history was known to Alfred and went to swell the stream of his meditations, which tended to assure him that he had a fresh and promising field before him, and to mature in him the purpose of exerting himself to win the hearty attachment of this well-affected but still half alien population.

* * *

Between Twelfth Day and Easter Day of the year 878 there were barely eleven weeks, for Easter fell early that year, namely on March 23. Of Alfred's doings in that interval we have no information, except in so far as it seems to be indicated that the affair of Cynwit was not conducted without his intervention. And we may add the traditional story of the cakes,

a story which probably dates from Alfred's day, as we have reasonably good evidence that it was current in the tenth century. Nor may we omit his espial of the Danish camp in minstrel guise, a legend which, though not found in early authorities, yet does claim some credit from the book in which it is narrated, namely the *Book of Hyde*—a book in which we might expect to find some early traditions of New Minster, one of king Alfred's foundations.

But while we desire to make the most of these items, it must be admitted that they constitute an inadequate furniture for eleven weeks of Alfred's time in the most intense crisis of his life. At any other point in Alfred's career, the silence of so many weeks might not provoke remark, but at this moment it makes a sensible void. If, however, we rightly apprehend the situation of the fugitive king, his hopes and his fears, his aims and his resources, we may (in the light of the great result) indulge a sober imagination without fear of considerable error.

Among the pieces of genuine tradition which seem to greet the explorer in Asser's *Life*, there

is perhaps none on which we may more confidently lean than a certain fragment in the paragraph beginning 'Interea tamen rex [1].'

The drift of this context is that with all his wars and frequent interruptions, Alfred ruled his kingdom, and 'practised every branch of the craft of venery; directed his goldsmiths and all his artificers; did moreover instruct the falconers and hawk-catchers and dog-trainers; and by his own novel engineering constructed buildings beyond all former wont, statelier and more costly; had Saxon books redd to him, and commanded others to learn Saxon poems by heart, &c.'

In this passage I seem to recognize a true historic note; and I think that in this picture of the range of his powers, and the roll of his accomplishments, his vast activity and versatility, we have some genuine reminiscences of the personality of Alfred. In the emphasis here laid on hunting, we may recognize the king who, some years later, sent a present of wolf-hounds to the archbishop of Rheims, and such

[1] In the edition by F. Wise (1722) it is on p. 48; in *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, p. 486.

dogs, too, that their quality and breed was accentuated by the receiver in his grateful acknowledgement [1]. And when to this we add that he could make and sing a song, could tell a good tale, could make choice of men and win their confidence, we need little aid from imagination to perceive how this mysterious visitor might captivate the British hearts of all Somerset like one man, and perhaps set them wondering whether it could be their own ideal king Arthur come back to them again.

During nearly three months of that eventful year his aim was to cultivate closer relations with the people of that outlying territory, desiring that they might become attached to him with sentiments of loyalty and friendship. To devote himself to this undertaking was at once his duty, his interest, and his delight. For such an achievement as this he had advantages both natural and acquired. Apart from war, there is nothing like hunting for making comrades, if a man have a genial soul and be

[1] This letter is printed in the edition of Asser by F. Wise, p. 123; and the most important parts are given in English by Mr. Conybeare, *Alfred in the Chroniclers*, p. 218.

himself a mighty hunter. Alfred *was* a mighty hunter and a genial soul, and close at hand there was one of the finest hunting-grounds in the world.

Immediately from the Pedridan swamp the ground began to rise to north and north-west towards a run of hilly and woodland country forty miles long, and from ten to twenty miles broad; a country which remains singular to this day for its natural breed of red deer and its chase of the great game. This royal sport survives on Exmoor and in the Quantocks, and there are Minehead people who can tell you that they have seen the stag-hunt scamper through their main street in full cry.

At the entrance of this country, at a point which is conveniently situated for uniting activity inland with a constant observation of the line of Pedrida, is a village which is now called North Newton, with which Petherton Park had been so long and closely linked that it went by the popular name of Newton Park. I am led by a number of small indications to infer that this is the place where Alfred had his chief residence during those early months of the year 878.

When Easter came, his action began to be overt; he dropped personal disguise, and stood forth as ÆLFRED CYNING. 'When Easter came, king Alfred, with a small force, constructed a fort at Athelney, and out of that fort was warring against the invading host, he and the men of Somerset, that portion of them which was nighest[1].' This is the action of a commander who has made sure of his following, and is now beginning his operations against the enemy. He fortifies himself on the east side of the bridge, where a conical hill offers an opportune position; and from that basis he opens a guerilla warfare with the invaders. He does not show his hand: he rather wants to be thought weak. This naturally draws away from head quarters more and more of the hostile force, who think that they shall presently deal a last blow to the Saxon resistance. And so with a petty and apparently futile display of military force, he continues to amuse and distract the enemy for the next six weeks.

[1] And þæs on Eastron worhte Ælfred cyning, litle werede, geweorc æt Æþelinga eigge, and of þam geweorce was winnende wiþ þone here, and Sumursætna se dæl se þær niehst wæs. *Sax. Chron.*, A. 878.

The impression made on the mind of the people by these events is traceable in two names: Athelney, which now represents Æthelinga Eig, the island of princes; and Borough Bridge, which means the bridge at the fortification. The fort which Alfred made in 878 is well preserved, the entrenchments occupying the summit of a conical hill near the east end of the bridge which spans the Parret, after its junction with the Tone.

How the king had employed the unrecorded months is manifest in the result. His muster-roll at Brixton Deveril, in the words of a contemporary, is brief yet eloquent: 'Then in the seventh week after Easter he rode to Ecgbrihtes Stân, on the eastern side of Selwood, and to meet him at that place came the men of Somerset, all of them, and the Wiltshire men, and of Hampshire the part that was on the hither side of the sea; and of him fain they were.' This passage of the *Saxon Chronicle* seems to render a satisfactory account of the manner in which the king had employed his time from Epiphany to Easter in the year 878.

Absorbed in this supreme effort, where his all

was at stake, he may well have found no time for recovering his buried Jewel, and he may never have revisited the spot until his marks were all obliterated.

From the land beyond Pedrida, which had hitherto counted to the crown of Wessex only as a recent territorial acquisition, now started up around the fugitive king an army of devoted warriors, who resolutely threw their weight into the scale, and rescued the dynasty of their conquerors.

Such was the nature of the force which Alfred now with a swelling heart perceived to be entirely at his disposal, and he buckled to the task of employing them to the best advantage. From the entrenched hill by Borough Bridge he prosecuted the war against the Danes, whose basis was at Chippenham, and this he continued for six weeks. This he could do with a small force, as he had great advantages of position. Between him and the foe lay the fenny channel of the Brue, which he and his people were expert in crossing. So it was comparatively easy for him to harass them and retire to his fort.

This kind of warfare, continued for six weeks,

must have had the designed effect of drawing off from the strength of the foe in Wiltshire, and causing them to concentrate their attention upon this feigned line of attack. For all this was only to amuse and distract the enemy, and so to facilitate the execution of a very different project, which the king was preparing. What was passing in Alfred's mind may (in all essentials) be redd in Lord Roberts's narrative of his preparations for attacking the Afghans, when they were entrenched on the Peiwar Kotal in December, 1878[1]. By making display of reconnoitring parties and other preparations as for a front attack, carrying this on to the extent of raising batteries and mounting guns, till he had caused the enemy to make counter dispositions accordingly, he with the utmost secrecy by a circuitous night march made a flank attack, taking them unprepared, and promptly dislodged them from an apparently impregnable position. So Alfred, while waging the six weeks' war, had his trusty messengers abroad all through Wiltshire and Hampshire, preparing for the tryst at Ecgbrihtes Stân.

[1] *Forty-one Years in India*, chap. xlvi.

Well may we exclaim with Sir Walter Besant —'What follows is like a dream!' Yea, verily, like a dream in its sudden transformation of the whole face and prospect of things, and equally unaccountable too; for no attempt to explain it by natural causes will ever match the stupendous result. It is not in order to dispel an illusion that we seek to trace the plan and the process—the illusion cannot be dispelled. No, rather it is in order to penetrate further into the action of a life that has kindled our admiration. Of that life we have a mirror in the enthusiasm with which his presence had fired the Welsh of Somerset beyond Pedrida. It is surely no mere accident that in the memorandum of that resolute force which mustered for his restoration, the first item should be—

SUMORSÆTE ALLE.

CHAPTER IX

NEWTON PARK AND FAIRFIELD HOUSE

From the date of its discovery in 1693 down to the present time, the name of 'Newton Park' has been associated with the Alfred Jewel as designating the property on which it was found. In our day, however, this name is no longer recognized in the neighbourhood, and indeed it is apt to be misleading. For this title is now current in Somerset in another sense, namely, as denoting the seat of Earl Temple at Newton St. Loe, near Bath. Still the honorific appellation of 'Newton Park,' for the estate on which the Jewel was discovered, will be found to rest upon historic antecedents, which are full of interest, and not devoid of suggestiveness for the purpose of our present investigation.

The extant mention of this Newton carries us back a good space behind the Norman Conquest. The Will of Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1006, affords evidence that he was a landowner in Newton. It is not generally possible to identify a place by a name which became so common, but the coupling of it in Abp. Ælfric's Will with the name of Fiddington, removes all uncertainty. The passage in the Will (which is cast in the third person) runs thus: 'And the land in the West Country at Fiddington and at Newton he bequeathed to his sisters and their children [1].'

In the forest laws, which grew up after the Conquest, we find that the custody of the royal forest of North Petherton was a serjeanty, which was attached to the Manor of Newton and caused it to be distinguished by the name of Newton Forester. When this Manor was granted by King John to William de Wrotham, it was declared that he held it by the service of being

[1] And ðe land be westan at Fittingtúne and at Niwantúne he becwæð his swcostrum and heora bearnum. Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus*, p. 719; Thorpe, *Diplomatarium*, p. 549; Earle, *Land Charters*, p. 223.

the king's forester in the counties of Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall. As he does not appear to have exercised his office beyond the county of Somerset, this territorial definition suggests that some vague prerogative had attached to Newton Manor at an earlier time.

In the third generation from the above grant this Manor passed with an heiress into the hands of William de Placetis. A generation later it was divided between three co-heiresses, Sabina, Evelina, and Emma. Then arose a question about the office of Forester, and it was found that it appertained to a particular messuage and meadow, and that these were included within the portion of Sabina, so she was declared Forester in fee of the forests of Exmoor, Neroche, Selwood, and Mendip, likewise custodian of the warren of Somerton; and these offices she discharged by deputy. In her time (26 Edw. I) occurred the Perambulation of the forests of the county, in pursuance of the Charter of the Forests which had been granted by Henry III. The forests were to be reduced to their ancient and lawful bounds, according to their limits at the accession of Henry I. The annual value of the lands

then disafforested was more than a hundred times as great as that of the legal forest of North Petherton.

In the time of Edward III the Manor of Newton with its rights and appurtenances belonged to Roger, earl of Mortimer, in whose descendants and in the dukes of York it continued to the time of Edward IV, when it came to the Crown, and then the Manor was quoted as Newton Regis. During this period the powers of Forester were delegated, and some interesting names occur in the list of deputies:

14 Ric. II. Richard Brettle and Gefferey Chaucer, esqrs., by the appointment of the earl of March.

21 Ric. II. Gefferey Chaucer, by Alienor, countess of March.

4 Hen. V. Thomas Chaucer, by Edward, earl of March.

8 Hen. VI. William Wrothe and Thomas Attemore.

12 Hen. VI. William Wrothe.

29 Hen. VI. Sir William Bonville and Richard Luttrell, by the duke of York.

14 Edw. IV. Sir Giles D'Aubeny, for life.

23 Hen. VII. Robert Wrothe, for thirty years.

Soon after the expiration of which term Sir Thomas Wrothe, son and heir of the last-named Robert, purchased of Edward VI the fee

of Petherton Park and the Manor of Newton Regis. The office of Forester had now fallen into decay and the ancient glory had departed, and the transfer of this property appears to have been governed by the ordinary considerations. In the time of Queen Elizabeth the descendants of Sir Thomas pulled down the park house, and carried the materials to a lodge called the Broad Lodge, which (said Collinson in 1791) 'the late Sir Thomas Wrothe improved to a handsome dwelling. The whole park[1] is now converted into farms.' The improvements of Sir Thomas Wrothe, here mentioned, have a probable connexion with our subject.

Such is the remarkable history of the Manor which has been at different times known as Newton Forester, Newton Placey, Newton Regis, and Newton Wrothe; and this history ministers occasion for a surmise that the distinction which attended this Manor may have had its roots considerably further back, inasmuch as the extant records do not offer an adequate account of that

[1] 'In this park was found the curious amulet of king Alfred, mentioned in vol. i, p. 87.' Collinson, *History of Somerset*, vol. iii, p. 62.

peculiar prerogative which made it so famous and so dignified.

I venture to suggest that the beginnings of this place, which has been so eminent, and which is now known by the comparatively obscure name of North Newton, may have been connected with the retreat of the king to Athelney, that this may have been a spot of his own selection. It is reached from Athelney by simply following the rise of the ground, it is well placed for keeping an eye on the Parret, the side from which a surprize was most to be apprehended, and it was the approach to the fine hunting-fields of Quantock and Exmoor. What more natural than that he should take a liking to the place and judge it convenient for a hunting-lodge? And I venture to throw out a surmise for consideration. May it not be that the prefix 'New' was set by the king himself, who gave the name of New Minster to his foundation at Winchester[1]?

[1] In Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus*, No. 320, there is a late and meagre abstract of a grant of land by king Alfred 'in loco qui dicitur Norðniwtune.' Kemble puts this place in Wiltshire, but why may it not be the North Newton by Athelney?

The name of Newton properly belonged only to the Manor, but as the lordship of this Manor was long coupled with the custody of Petherton Park, and as the two were habitually associated in men's minds, the latter came to be spoken of as 'Newton Park,' and this title is simply a colloquial variation and equivalent for Petherton Park. The correct name of Petherton Park is constantly used by Leland in the extract from his *Itinerary* which is given in the previous chapter. So that when the Alfred Jewel is said to have been found in Newton Park, this is only a popular way of saying that it was found in Petherton Park. The discovery occurred in the time of Sir Thomas Wrothe, who was also the enlarger of the mansion, and it is a probable inference that it was found in the excavations which were required for this work [1].

The scene now shifts from Newton to the neighbouring parish of Stogursey or, as modern research has taught us to write it,

The orthography of the name would be not that of the original grant, but of the abridger's time. Appendix F.

[1] I am indebted for this suggestion to Sir Alexander Acland Hood.

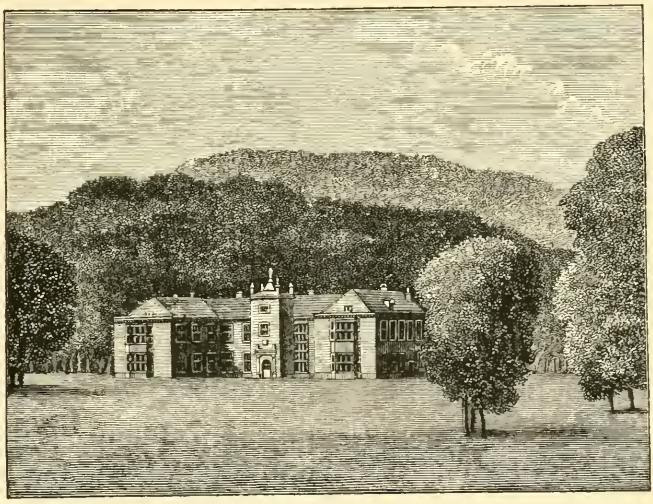
Stoke Courcy. In this parish is Fairfield House, a handsome Elizabethan mansion in which the Alfred Jewel was preserved for a quarter of a century, from the time of its discovery in 1693, until it was given to the University of Oxford in 1718 [1].

About the time of Henry II the lands of 'Ferfelle' were severed from those of Honibere, and erected into a separate estate.

By-and-by the name slid into a new form, conveying a new idea. The new name into which it merged is one that has been freely propagated both at home and in the colonies, with pleasing associations of soft and gently undulating landscape suggestive of homely scenery and a sheltered situation. Very dif-

[1] To be quite exact, its lodging for the first five years is matter of inference from the fact that in 1698 it is described as being at Fairfield, without any indication of a change of ownership. One transfer however there must have been. The place of discovery made it the property of Sir Thomas Wrothe; and as Nathaniel Palmer was his mother's brother, it is easy to understand the gift of the nephew to his uncle, who may have been a man of antiquarian tastes. We can also understand the desire of Nathaniel Palmer that this precious relic should go to Oxford, as he, with many others of his family, had been educated at the University, of which Alfred was the reputed founder. Appendix G.

ferent is the connotation of the name in its documentary form. In 'Ferfelle' we can see only some outlying 'remoter fell,' such as would be little visited save for uses of summer pasture. In Collinson's picture of the mansion, which is



FAIRFIELD HOUSE.

here reproduced, while the foreground seems to justify the modern name, the hills and hanging woods at the back of the house seem to bear out the more primitive signification of an outlying mountain fell. And probably this was also the

idea which originally gave name to the well-known mountain in Westmoreland over Grasmere.

After a succession of owners of various names this new estate came (14 Edw. I) into the possession of William de Vernai, who had married the sole daughter and heiress of the previous proprietor. For nearly three hundred years there was always a Vernai at Fairfield. In 12 Edw. IV the Vernai of that day (the fourth of the name of William) had a licence to build a wall and seven round towers about his mansion-house at Fairfield, and to enclose two hundred acres of ground for a park. 'The tomb in the Vernais isle in the fine old Priory church of Stoke Courcy, with an image of an armed man lying thereon, belongs to this William Vernai' (Collinson).

Fairfield had come into the family of Vernai by an heiress, and at length it passed in the same manner to the family of Palmer. Hugh de Vernai left one only daughter, and she was called Elizabeth, after the great queen, who was her godmother. On the death of her father her wardship was granted to Sir Thomas Palmer,

of Parham, in the county of Sussex, Knt.; to whose only son, William, she was afterwards married. Soon after this marriage, Sir Thomas Palmer pulled down the old house, and began the present mansion, which was completed by his grandson (also Sir Thomas Palmer, Knt.), who inherited Fairfield in 1587. This proprietor was not a keeper at home. In 1595 he was with Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins in the expedition to Porto Rico, and afterwards commanded a ship at the taking of Cadiz, where he was knighted. He was one of the most considerable persons in the Court of Queen Elizabeth; but on the accession of King James he resolved to spend the remainder of his days beyond the seas, and accordingly, in the year 1605, he went with the earl of Nottingham into Spain, where, as he was providing a settlement for his family at Valladolid, he died of the small-pox, and was there buried.

William Palmer, his son and heir, was a man of learning, and chose to live in London, and he was, in the time of Charles I, fined a thousand pounds by the Star Chamber for disobedience to the king's proclamation, which required all

persons of estate to reside and keep hospitality at their country houses.

His brother Peregrine, who succeeded him, went as a volunteer to the Palatinate wars, and was afterwards an officer in the Swedish army. As soon as the royal standard was set up he repaired to Nottingham, and faithfully served King Charles in the commissions of major, lieutenant-colonel, and colonel of horse, being present at the battles of Edgehill, Marston Moor, Cropredy Bridge, and Naseby. He died in 1684, having married Anne, the daughter of Nathaniel Stevens, in the county of Gloucester, Esq., and he was succeeded in the estate by his eldest surviving son, Nathaniel, who is reported in the *Philosophical Transactions* as the possessor of the Alfred Jewel in the year 1698[1]. He served in several parliaments for the boroughs of Minehead and Bridgwater, and for the county of Somerset. The first recorded possessor of the Alfred Jewel died in 1717. He was succeeded by his son Thomas, who resided at Fairfield, where he lived a studious life, investigating the antiquities of his country. His

[1] Appendix A.

manuscript is preserved at Fairfield, and it was a valuable source of information to Collinson, the historian of Somerset. It is from this source we learn that the Jewel was 'dug up,' an expression which seems to justify the inference that it was not accidentally lost, but purposely buried [1]. It was he who, in 1718, gave the Alfred Jewel to the University of Oxford.

He married a daughter of Sir Thomas Wrothe of Petherton Park, who died in 1721, leaving two daughters co-heiresses. The elder of these was married to Sir Hugh Acland, of Columb-John in the county of Devon, Bart., and the younger to Mr. Thomas Palmer, who died without issue. He was succeeded by his brother Peregrine, who represented the University of Oxford in several parliaments, and died in 1762, the last survivor of his name and family. He left his estate to Arthur Acland, Esq., his next of kin, from whom it has descended to Sir Alexander Acland Hood, Baronet, the present owner of the Fairfield estate.

[1] Appendix G.

CHAPTER X

GOLD RINGS CONTEMPORANEOUS

The earliest recorded doubt as to the identity of the Ælfred of the Jewel with Alfred of Wessex was grounded upon the high artistic quality of the work[1]. It may therefore be illustrative if we advert to some other specimens of English jewellery belonging to those early times. One such has already been quoted above (p. 68), namely, the 'enamelled ouche' of Mr. Roach Smith, which is now in the British Museum. This is a piece of great beauty and high technical skill; and it has every appearance of belonging to these times, but there is nothing to fix its date more definitely. Happily, there are specimens of English jewellery of the ninth century which exclude this doubt. We

[1] See above, p. 7.

have no less than three inscribed gold rings which certainly belonged to eminent contemporaries of Alfred, and two of them to members of his family circle; insomuch that we may say, with some confidence, that these two must have been familiar objects to his eye.

The Ring of Alhstan, who was Bishop of Sherborne from 824 to 867.

In chronological order the first of these three rings is one that bears the name of Alhstan. It was found in the year 1753 at Llysfaen, in the county of Carnarvon. It was figured and described in the *Archæologia*, iv. 47, by Mr. Pegge, whose letter is dated July 6, 1771. He identified the name with Ealhstan or Ealchstan, the warlike bishop of Sherborne. It may seem strange that the bishop of Sherborne's ring should be found in Carnarvonshire; but the *Saxon Chronicle* suggests a simple and natural explanation. In the year 853 Æthelwulf, king of Wessex, was petitioned by the king and Witan of Mercia to aid them in the subjugation of the Welsh, who were in rebellion. Consequently, Æthelwulf

marched with an army into Wales, and restored the imperial authority of Mercia.

This operation (which was part of the defence of the country against the Danes, whom the Welsh of Cambria were prone to support) would naturally have been conducted with the advice and under the management of Alhstan[1]. The name Llysfaen ('Stone Court') fitly describes the rocky enclosure in which the ring was found, and in which we may suppose that the final negotiations were conducted. Preoccupation of mind in momentous business makes it easy to imagine how the old war-chief of Æthelwulf might have lost his ring. Among the selfsame rocks of Llysfaen, and near the spot where the Alhstan ring was discovered, another ring was shortly afterwards found, containing a greater weight of gold, but of comparatively rude workmanship, and not inscribed.

The Alhstan ring now belongs to the Waterton Collection, which is preserved in the South

[1] Alhstan had accompanied Ecgberht on his famous expedition into Cornwall in 825, and we find him with the forces of Somerset and Dorset in 845 to oppose the Danes at the mouth of Pedrida. See Mr. Plummer's note to *Sax. Chron.*, A. 823.

Kensington Museum. It is of that type (not uncommon in Roman rings) which suggests derival from a string of beads. The lettering occupies four circular compartments, which alternating with four lozenge-shaped compartments, constitute the hoop of the ring. Pegge saw the dragon of Wessex in the grotesque animals which occupy the lozenge-shaped compartments. The characters are beautiful Roman capitals of Anglo-Saxon type, except the N, which is represented by the Rune ᚾ. Besides the *Archæologia*, the ring is figured in *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*, a monumental book which was published in connexion with the Manchester Exhibition of 1857.

INSCRIBED GOLD RING OF ÆTHELWULF, KING OF WESSEX (836–855).

✠ EDELHÆLVVLF R

The second of the three rings is inscribed in the above form with the name of Alfred's father,

king Ethelwulf, for whom it was evidently made. It is in the form of a bishop's mitre, with only one peak.

In 1781, March 22, Lord Radnor brought this find before the Society of Antiquaries. It had been found in the summer of 1780 in a field in the parish of Laverstoke, near Salisbury. According to the finder's story, it was brought

to the surface by the pressure of a cart-wheel, and it lay exposed on the edge of the rut. Mr. Howell, a silversmith in Salisbury, gave the man thirty-four shillings for the value of the gold, and Lord Radnor bought it of Mr. Howell. It still shows the effect of hard pressure, being almost flattened. It was figured in the *Archæologia*, vii. 421, and repeatedly since. It is preserved in the British Museum.

A Gold Ring upon which the Name of Æthelswith, Queen of Mercia, has been incised.

In the two rings already described, the names of Alhstan and Æthelwulf belong to the fabric of the rings, as the name of Ælfred belongs to the fabric of the Jewel. But it is different in the ring of queen Æthelswith.

This ring swells out into a dilated bezil, on the cop of which is an *Agnus Dei*, beautifully engraved in relief, with a background of niello. The interior of this bezil (which would be in contact with the wearer's finger) was a fair gold surface when the ring was finished and put out of hand by the goldsmith. Subsequently, the name of Æthelswith has been incised upon that surface with the fine point of a graving tool, somewhat in this form: ✠ EAÐELSVIÐ REGNA, where the N is a monogram for IN, so that the inscription reads ✠ Æthelswith Regina.

The incision is so slight and so fresh that it

is manifest the ring had no considerable wear after it was done [1].

Æthelswith was the daughter of Æthelwulf and sister of Alfred, and consort of Burgred, king of Mercia, who was driven out by the Danes in 874, and retired to Rome, where he died. Æthelswith died in 888 at Pavia, apparently on pilgrimage. The annal recording it runs thus: '888. This year the alms of the West Saxons and of king Alfred were conducted to Rome by "Beocca ealdorman." And queen Æthelswith, who was king Alfred's sister, died, and was buried at Pavia [2].'

[1] But the edges of the ring show (as Franks pointed out) traces of long wear. He goes on to say: 'The engraving, moreover, scarcely looks like the work of a goldsmith. I would therefore suggest, that the Queen had probably offered this ring at some shrine, and the priests connected with the shrine had engraved her name within the ring, to record the royal giver.' *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, 2nd Series, vol. vi, p. 307.

[2] 888. Her lædde Beocca ealdorman West Sea na ælmessan and Ælfredes cyninges to Rome. ⁊ Æþelswiþ cuen, sio wæs Ælfredes sweostor cyninges, forþferde, ⁊ hire lic liþ æt Pafian.

This fine nielloed ring was found near Aberford in Yorkshire, in or about the year 1870. It was first observed by a ploughman at the point of his ploughshare. He brought it to his master, who, thinking it brass, attached it to his dog's collar, where it hung until some one assured him it was gold, whereupon he carried it to a silversmith at York, and exchanged it for spoons. From this dealer it was purchased by Canon Greenwell of Durham, from whom it passed into the possession of Sir Wollaston Franks, and ultimately by his bequest came to the British Museum.

When we consider how very small is the whole number of extant gold rings (whether inscribed or not) that date from the Saxon period, it must strike us as a very remarkable circumstance that we are able to produce three such examples, all within the period of Alfred's life, and two of

them belonging to such near relations that we may naturally suppose they were familiar objects to his eye.

And there is a fourth ring, of which we cannot assert that it belongs to this very select group, but which certainly must be assigned to the same general period, and claims association with the three. It is a simple hoop of gold, a good quarter of an inch wide, having its outer surface covered with the following engraved inscription nielloed[1]:

✠ ᚫðREDᛗEᛣᚪHEᚪᚾREDᛗEᛣᚫXROK

ÆðRED MEC AH EANRED MEC AGROF: that is, *Æðred me owns, Eanred me engraved.*

Hickes described this ring in his *Thesaurus* (Preface, pp. viij and xiij) with a good figure:

[1] Professor Stephens of Copenhagen, *Runic Monuments*, Part II, p. 463, dated it 'about A.D. 700–800': but in this estimate he has been guided (I think) not by anything in the artistic design or execution, but simply by the large proportion of Runes in the mixed lettering, a criterion of very doubtful value.

but in the interpretation he redd the last word as AGROFT, taking an idle mark like an inverted T as part of the word; whereas it is there only to fill out the space. In the lettering there are five Runes: namely, the Æ in ÆÐRED, the N in EANRED, and the A, G, and F in AGROF. This is the ring which was alluded to above (p. 17), in connexion with the archaic pronoun MEC, which occurs twice on it.

In 1705, when this ring was described by Hickes, it was in the possession of Dr. Hans Sloane: it is now in the British Museum.

The forms 'Æthred' and 'Æthered' are colloquial abbreviations of 'Æthelred,' which was the name of that one among the brothers of Alfred, with whom his relations were closest. But the frequency of the name forbids us to assert that this ring was made for king Æthelred. The names 'Æthelwulf' and 'Æthelswith' are in themselves exceptional, and when combined with the royal title are absolutely identifying: the name 'Alhstan,' combined with the peculiar aspect of the ring and the circumstances of its discovery, not much less so; but the name 'ÆTHRED,' though forcibly aided by the noble aspect of the ring,

only enables us to assert a degree of probability which every one must determine for himself.

Everything in the appearance of these rings declares them to be the work of Saxon artists, and on the ÆÐRED ring the artist bears a good Saxon name. Such specimens must finally dissipate any lingering relics of the old prejudice, that the work of the Alfred Jewel is too good to have been produced in the England of the ninth century. We may rest assured that the excellence of the workmanship carries with it no presumption against its being English work of the time of king ALFRED.

CHAPTER XI

SOME CLOSING REFLECTIONS

Among the various criticisms which have been elicited by the Alfred Jewel during the two hundred and seven years which have elapsed since its discovery in the year 1693, the opinion that the name it bears is that of the king has not met with more than one definite and formulated objection. This objection, if it had prevailed, would have excluded the production of such a work in king Alfred's time, as a thing impossible. But the question thus raised has evoked evidence of so overpowering a nature as not only to neutralize the objection, but also to increase the balance of probability in favour of the opinion that the person named on the Jewel is Alfred of Wessex.

The name, combined with the costliness and

the strongly marked individuality of the work, draws the mind naturally to think of the most remarkable person who bore that name; but, in addition, we have to consider that it was found in the neighbourhood of the very spot which is most closely associated with the career of the selfsame person. In these obvious prima facie elements of the case, there is an accumulation of probability, which fully justified Hickes in saying that from his first sight of the Jewel he had never doubted its having been a personal possession of king Alfred's [1].

To this central and primary body of evidence other instances of probability have been added in the course of the present Essay. The investigation of the Epigraph led us to the conclusion that the diction answered well to the time of king Alfred's life, and also that it bore some resemblance to an analogous piece of his admitted writing.

Our examination of theories concerning the design and use of the Jewel resulted in the conclusion that the suggestions hitherto advanced were inadmissible, and of no other value than

[1] See above, p. 8.

as narrowing the field of conjecture. We at least know a number of things that have appeared plausible in their time, and are now no more to be thought of; namely, an amulet, a pendant to a collar of state, a decorated umbilicus, the head of a stilus, a military standard, the handle of a book-pointer, the tip of a sceptre.

Our review of the abortiveness of early speculations concerning the design and use of the Jewel drove us by a process of elimination to seek a place for it in the helmet. In favour of this new theory historical evidence has been adduced, such as has not been offered in support of any other explanation. Unless this theory is approved, both the Alfred Jewel and the minor jewel from Minster Lovel remain without explanation. There is not so much as a theory in the field. On the other hand, if this new theory is judged to be right, or to have high probability, then this circumstance makes strongly in favour of the identification of the Jewel with king Alfred. For it points to a warrior, a helmet-wearer, and to a person of commanding position.

One of the effects of the present investigation upon myself has been to convince me (in the

face of what I counted a settled opinion) that the enamelled Figure is a product of these islands; and that it is not necessary for us to look abroad towards Byzantium, or further east, for a satisfactory account of it. This unity again is in favour of identification with Alfred of Wessex, whose conspicuous interest in jewellers' work is asserted by a well-sustained tradition.

The symbolism of the Jewel appears to contain an allegorical representation of the designer's position, both inherited and chosen, both national and personal. His religious standing is pictured in the Figure and its back-plate; and the ancient religion of his nation in the boar's head, once dominant, now under foot, forming a pedestal for the Head of the Church. And to this I will add the surmise, that perhaps the scales or waves on the small triangular space in the reverse signify that his country is an island in the ocean.

I am not without apprehension that these explanations may strike some readers as too minute and too far-fetched, and that I may be charged with bringing out of the Jewel more

than is in it. I will therefore endeavour to anticipate this charge with a few apologetic words. And first of all, I think it well to state that I did not set out with any idea of discovering latent meanings in the Jewel. When first I discoursed upon it, I contented myself with exhibiting drawings of the object, narrating the story of the discovery, explaining the inscription, and rehearsing the opinions which had been put forward concerning such a remarkable find. This furnished material to fill an hour, and to satisfy an audience. Whatever I have added to the traditional exegesis has broken in upon me from time to time at wide intervals, causing me on such occasions more surprize and pleasure than I can hope to impart to my readers.

For those who would test the symbolism of the Jewel, there is an obvious preliminary question. Is there any reason to think that Alfred had an aptitude and a fondness for allegory? This question has been to me a valuable guide in observations on the extant writings of the king. It would be easy to show, by examples drawn from his writings, that he had a marked fondness

for imagery and parable, that his habit of mind inclined to all figures of analogy and similitude. It was not a previous knowledge of these in the writings that led me to look for them in the Jewel, but reversely. I am not aware that any one had called attention to this characteristic in the writings: I do not think I apprehended it from any other source than the Jewel itself. In regard to this particular feature, the Jewel has (for me) thrown light on the writings, and these again have reflected illustration back upon the Jewel. I hope this explanation may make it easier for some to think that the imagery of the Jewel is a strong indication that Alfred of Wessex was the designer.

It was with this aim that, in chapter vii, I quoted the poetical Epilogue to Alfred's *Pastoralis*, and with the same aim I now proceed to quote a long-drawn simile in prose, which the king inserted into his translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*. It is in the fourth book, where the discussion is about Providence and Fate [1].

[1] The Anglo-Saxon text may be found in Cardale's edition (1829), p. 338, and in the recent edition by Mr. Sedgefield, p. 129.

In the abstract and implicit manner natural to the sage of a mature and over-blown culture, Boethius had illustrated the relation between Providence and Fate by the relation between the centre of the circle and its circumference. This analogy is stated in mathematical fashion. A series of concentric circles offer points of external contact more numerous in some and less numerous in others, according as their circumference is nearer or further from the common centre, but the centre itself is unaffected by such chances; it remains always the same, one and indivisible. The stable centre is Divine Providence; by the various contact of the circumferences with external things is represented the vicissitude of Fate or Fortune.

This refined similitude was translated by king Alfred, out of the diamond-cut succinct Latin of Boethius, into the homely speech of his own people, by means of a concrete figure that was familiar to every son of the soil.

Accordingly some things in this world are subject to Fate, some are no whit subject thereto: but Fate, and all the things subject to it, are in subjection to Divine Providence. Concerning this I can rehearse unto thee a similitude, whereby thou mayest the better understand, which men be subject to Fate,

and which be not. All this moving and revolving creation revolves upon God, who is immovable, unchangeable, and one: and he wieldeth all creatures just as he at the first had ordained, and still doth ordain.

As on a waggon's axle the wheels revolve and the axle standeth still and beareth the whole waggon and governs all the motion; while the wheel turns about, and the nave next to the axle moves more steadily and more securely than the fellies do: in such a manner that the axle is the highest good, which we call God, and the happiest men move nighest to God, even as the nave moveth nighest to the axle, and the middling sort are just like the spokes; forasmuch as every spoke hath one end fast in the nave and the other end in the felly. So it is with men of the middling sort; at one time he thinks in his mind about this earthly life, at another time about the heavenly; like a man looking with one eye to heaven and with the other to earth. Just as the spokes have one end sticking in the felly and the other in the nave, while the middle of the spoke is equally near to both, even so are the middling men in the middle of the spoke, and the better men nearer to the nave, and the meaner men nearer to the fellies: they are, however, in connexion with the nave, and the nave with the axle. So now, the fellies though they are attached to the spokes, yet are they altogether rolling upon the earth; so are the meanest connected with the middling and the middling with the best and the best with God. Though the meanest men all direct their love to this world, yet can they not rest thereon, nor be of any account, unless they be in some measure associated with God, any more than the wheel's fellies can be in progress, unless they be attached to the spokes and the spokes to the axle. The

fellies are the farthest from the axle; therefore they move the most unevenly. The nave moves next to the axle; and that is why it has the surest motion. So do the happiest men: as they set their love nearer to God, and more resolutely contemn these earthly things, so are they more free from care, and less they reck how Fate may chance to turn, or what it may bring. In like manner the nave is continually so sure, jolt the fellies on whatso they may jolt; and this even though the nave is somewhat apart from the axle. By this figure thou mayest understand that as the waggon is much more durably sound, the less it is parted from the axle; so are those men the freest of all from care (whether about anxieties of this life or of the next) who are fast in God: but in whatever degree they are asunder from God, in the same degree are they worried and harassed, both in mind and in body.

This prose simile is unquestioned as an original piece of king Alfred's authorship, and so is also the poetical epilogue to his *Pastoralis*, which was quoted above in the seventh chapter. Can any one doubt that his mind was exuberantly fertile in allegorical thought, and shall it be judged a thing improbable that in his imaginative youth, having recently passed through a very grand and rude transition of experience, he should have strained the plasticity of a favourite craft to body forth the symbolic expression of thoughts too deep for common speech?

As the course of investigation into the variety and unity of this composite Jewel brings it more and more home to the creative mind of Alfred, the conviction rises that this work represents no passing freak of artistic fancy, nor the fond elaboration of some fascinating idea (as in a sonnet); but rather that we have before us the thoughtful record of a period of life and a phase of some duration, containing serious reflections by one who had reached a higher stage of observation, a stage commanding a wider outlook. Of some such a crisis as this the Alfred Jewel appears to be the pictorial and symbolic monument.

And if this impression is sound, it ought to help us to some further conclusions. We ought with this help to be able to form some estimate of the period in which this Jewel was designed. However we may lament the poverty of detailed incident in the life of Alfred, we are not ignorant of its main divisions. And we are now in a position to ask—To which of these divisions does this carefully elaborated design most naturally belong?

In seeking materials for the answer to this

question, I will first consider the probabilities of the case, which are suggested by the course of public events: and then, secondly, I will come to the indications which are personal to Alfred himself. This plan may tend to clearness, though it be not feasible to keep the two aspects quite apart.

For a basis to this enquiry, we must take the year 878, as being that in which the Jewel disappeared. This is now an established point in our argument. To this we were led both by history and by tradition: and it is only by keeping as close as possible to these that we can shun the proclivities of arbitrary hypothesis.

1. Taking then the year 878 as that in which Alfred saw the Jewel for the last time, how far back must we recede to come to the most probable time for his inventing it? Our first step must be to skip the seven years since his accession in 871. A glimpse at the events of that period may suffice to assure us that the constant pressure of sterner duties would have left him in no mood to amuse himself with enamel and filigree. And even if for the sake of winter relaxation he had done so, I think

he would not have designated himself as plain Ælfred, when he was king. During his reign his constant style was ÆLFRED CYNING, and it would have been quite easy to have added the letter R to his name, as his father did when he ordered the fashion of his ring. For these reasons (among others), I think the Jewel was made before 871.

We may still recede another long step, and say that the date we seek was probably before 866. That is the year in which Alfred began to share the burden of reigning without the title, the year in which the common danger entered upon a new and more menacing phase, as the heathen invasion began to be more systematically conducted. Wessex was not indeed attacked until the last of these five years, but the whole period must have been passed in apprehension and intense preparation. Accordingly, this process of reasoning back from the year 878 by the light of public events brings us to the result that the design and execution of the Jewel is probably to be dated before A.D. 866, that is to say, it must belong to the reign of king Æthelberht.

2. Coming now to the second process, we have to consider at what time it appears likely that Alfred might have been in the mood for such a work as this, and also in circumstances (as to his immediate surroundings) favourable for artistic and allegorical meditation. When does it appear likely that he had leisure for thinking out these details, while at the same time his mind was exercised with the themes represented in the Jewel? It was certainly subsequent to his return from Rome; not immediately, but after an interval, when the first agitation of his mind had subsided, and he had become reconciled to his lot.

For we cannot doubt that when he returned from Rome to England, and witnessed the state of his country—the danger and the depression—he must have experienced a great revulsion of feeling, a strong outburst of regret for the long and happy time that he had been enjoying abroad. His passionate yearning for Rome and his friends there must have amounted to something like a violent fit of home-sickness. All this it was his duty to live down; and to do so he had to look the facts in the face, and

take their measure and their bearing, and ascertain their relation to his path of duty, and interpret his position by the light of a religious conscience. Some earnest and ardent minds would find solace and strength in writing poetry, and perhaps Alfred did so. If this Jewel is not the equivalent of such a poem it is nearly akin to it. In constructive art there certainly is a solace of a healing kind, and the Jewel before us answers remarkably to the situation. It is in many particulars like the outcome of such a mood. And if such a mood is likely to have followed the return of the young prince to England, it concerns us to form some opinion about the probable date of that event.

It is asserted in the bilingual Chronicle (F) that Alfred returned to England on the occasion of his father's death, which took place in January, 858; but the statement is discredited by considerations which Mr. Plummer has given in his notes to the *Saxon Chronicle* (vol. ii, p. 80). Two years later, in 860, his eldest brother, Æthelbald, king of Wessex, died; and this event occasioned a definite call for his return. The three brothers, Æthelbald, Æthered, and Ælfred,

held lands in common which were given by their father to these three sons, in such a way that the whole was to come to the latest survivor. This property would now pass to the two brothers, Æthered and Ælfred; and for the sanction of this transfer it was necessary that the parties should appear before the Witan. This transaction is related in Alfred's Will. The two brothers agreed that their joint property should be held in trust by Æthelbriht, the new king, and that he should farm it for the benefit of his younger brothers, a trust which he fully discharged.

At the death of Æthelbriht and the accession of Æthered in 866, the heathen invasion began to assume a more alarming form; but the reign of Æthelbriht had been a quiet time, at least for Wessex. This period (860 to 866), from Alfred's thirteenth to his eighteenth year, would be a time of leisure, and he would be at the age of youthful reverie, and his mind would be stimulated by reports that would reach his ear of the savagery of the heathen raids in neighbour and kindred nations contrasted with the humanities of Christianity, while his memory

would contrast the learned culture of Rome with the ignorance of his own people. These appear to be apt conditions for exercising the mind of a serious prince with such thoughts as we find symbolized in the Alfred Jewel.

In collecting evidence for the argument of this Essay, I have been solicitous to omit nothing that seemed to make for the credit of a Jewel, concerning which I am persuaded in my own mind that it bears the authentic signature of Alfred of Wessex. I hope that this aim has not betrayed me into the use of any arguments which are of no validity. And if any reader's opinion should be against me on this point, I would ask him to consider that in the region of probability all men do not judge exactly alike: one may think a particular fact or tradition of no argumentative value, while another may hesitate to exclude it. And even if any such instance were disallowed and ruled to be of no weight, still it cannot invalidate the rest.

Morally, it may damage the effect of the whole, because it may prejudice the mind of

the reader; but logically, it leaves the argumentative effect of the rest where it was before. Such being the case, I have leaned toward comprehension as being the more useful course; and if I have erred I hope I may claim the reader's indulgence, on the ground of being faithful to the view which I had of the task before me.

In this scientific age, there are more persons who can appreciate a train of exact serial reasoning than of those who can do justice to a combination of probabilities. It is not very rare to find disputants capable of testing a mathematical demonstration, who if they had to examine a probable argument might dismiss it with the proverbial maxim, which says that no chain is stronger than its weakest link.

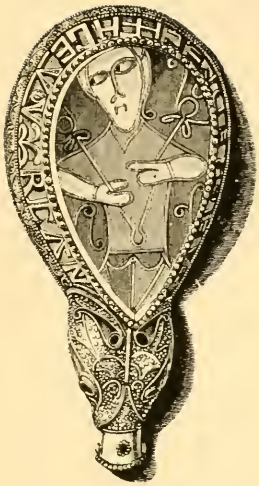
There are arguments which are like a chain, and to them the maxim applies: one weak link vitiates the conclusion. Such are the demonstrations in Euclid. But the argument which runs through this book is not of that kind, rather it resembles a bundle, and to such the maxim does not apply. It cannot be said, for example, that no faggot is stronger than its weakest stick. And this is the simile which

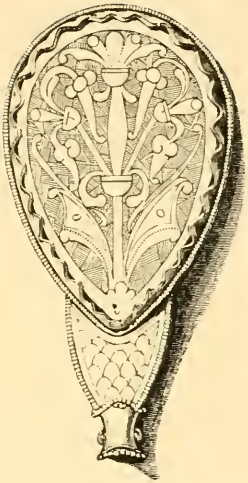
applies to the evidence in probable reasoning. It is not linked, but massed.

When Gulliver awoke on the shore of Liliput and found that he was fastened to the ground, the threads which bound him were severally slight, but the total effect was irresistible. Analogous thereto was the combined effect of many partial and inconclusive arguments on the mind of Sir Francis Palgrave, when he testified that 'no one, taking all the points of evidence together, can reasonably doubt but that it did belong to king Alfred[1].'

This conclusion may now be somewhat amplified. I trust we are now in a position to say with reasonable confidence, that not only did this Jewel belong to Alfred of Wessex, having been made by his order; but further, that it was his work, having been made after his design; and further again, that the design referred to, and was based upon, his own position; and, moreover, that the Jewel was a production of his youth, of the period after his return from Rome, and before he assumed a share in public affairs by the side of his brother Æthelred.

[1] See above, p. 84.





THE JEWEL, FRONT AND BACK.

To face p. 174.]

APPENDIX A

THE FIRST PUBLISHED NOTICE OF THE ALFRED JEWEL

(pp. 25 and 144)

The following is an Article in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of London, vol. xx, No. 247, page 441:—

Part of a Letter from Dr. Musgrave, Fellow of the College of Physicians and R. S., to Dr. Sloane; concerning a Piece of Antiquity lately found in Somersetshire.

I enclose, to you, the Figure (see Fig. 4) of a curious piece of Antiquity, lately found near Ashelney in Somersetshire; the Place where King Alfred built, as Milton affirms, a Fortress: But according to William of Malmsbury, a Monastery; in Memory (as some have thought) of his Deliverance, obscure Retreat to that Place, and Concealment in it, from the Danes.

The Substance is in the Possession of Col. P. of Fairfeild in the same County; by whose Permission, I had the Sight of it. 'Tis of the same Length and Breadth with the Figure: the Work very fine; so as to make some Men question its true Age: But in all probability, it did belong to that great King, it is so well represented in the Figure, that a short Description will suffice.

The Edge is thin, as far as the Letters. The Letters are on a Plane rising obliquely. All within the inner Pyramidal Line is on a Plane equi-distant from the Reverse. The Representation (in that upper Plane) seems to be of some Person in a Chair. It is in Enamel, cover'd over with a Crystal; which is secured in its place by the little Leaves coming over its Edges. In the Reverse are Flowers engraved. The whole piece may be of the Weight of Three Guineas. The Chrystal and Enamel excepted, it is all of pure Gold.

This, perhaps, was an Amulet of King Alfred's.

Exon, *Dec.* 10, 1698.

APPENDIX B

ST. NEOT AND ST. CUTHBERT

(pp. 29 and 74)

Among the tentative interpretations of the enamelled Figure both of these saints have at different times been put forward, as was only natural, since they both hold a place in the current narratives of king Alfred's life. But it is well to observe that their several relations to the stream of tradition are neither equal nor alike. The first is found united with that stream in the tenth century, that is to say, at the highest point which has been reached in the investigation of these episodes. As to what is told of St. Neot, however unlikely, it cannot be pronounced impossible that it may have had some original right to the place which it holds. The second is a transparent fraud, introduced

in the twelfth century by wrong-headed zeal. A few details will make this clear.

The oldest source for the life of St. Neot is an Anglo-Saxon homily of that well-known type which sprang out of the monastic revival associated with the names of Odo and Æthelwold and Dunstan. Conspicuous examples of this type are the Lives of St. Edmund, King and Martyr, and of St. Swithun.

At this epoch the relics of St. Neot (by a traffic too intricate for us to unravel) were removed from their natural resting-place at St. Neots in Cornwall, where the man had lived and died, to enrich a new foundation in Huntingdonshire, where influential persons were planting a new monastery, which became a second St. Neots. We may pretty safely assume that this event, which happened about 984, gave rise to the biography, in which the relations of St. Neot to Alfred form the distinguishing feature. Of this writing only a late and somewhat interpolated copy has reached our times.

The modern historian will not hesitate to say of St. Cuthbert that his relations to Alfred are wholly fictitious; but he cannot undertake to

say the same of St. Neot. Nevertheless, they are equally out of the question so far as regards the *icuncula*. The idea that the Figure might be St. Neot is excluded by the homily, which places the death of St. Neot shortly before the troubles of Alfred, and the accepted date is 877. According to the most probable chronology we have been able to make out for the Jewel, it was fabricated before 866.

The legendary connexion of St. Cuthbert with Alfred dates from the twelfth century, and is apparently due to Simeon the historian, who was a monk of the monastery of Durham, and who, when about thirty-five years old, witnessed the impressive ceremonial of the translation of the great saint of the North Country, which took place in 1104.

When he compiled his narrative of the reign of king Alfred, he sacrificed facts of history to the fame of the saint. Omitting genuine details which he had at hand, he subjected the capital events of Alfred's life to the patronage of St. Cuthbert. Thus he begins: 'In the year 877 the nefarious host quitted Exeter and came to

Chippenham and wintered there. King Alfred in those days endured great tribulations and lived an unsettled life. Being encouraged with an explicit oracle by St. Cuthbert, king Alfred fought against the Danes, at the time and in the place which the saint had directed, and gained the victory, and from that time forward he was terrible and invincible to his enemies. The manner in which he vanquished his foes is related as followeth.'

In such a manner was this figment introduced into the page of history, where it long continued in good repute. Hickes was so much swayed by it, that he relinquished his first interpretation of the *icuncula* in favour of St. Cuthbert.

If the connexion of Alfred with St. Neot is (as it may well be) of a mythical nature, or even an invention of the biographer, he did but use the licence which was then accorded to the panegyrist; and it is very different from that abuse of the authority of the historian which introduced St. Cuthbert into the narrative of the deeds of Alfred.

APPENDIX C

THE TWO-SCEPTRED FIGURE IN THE BOOK OF KELLS

(p. 78)

I AM indebted to Miss Swann for the following extract from Professor Westwood's *Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Art* (p. 29):

The drawing representing (as I apprehend) the Temptation of the Saviour occurs on fol. 202 v., and is copied in my Plate XI.

Here the bust of the Saviour is represented at the summit of an elaborately ornamented conical design, which I suppose represents a 'pinnacle of the temple' rather than the 'exceeding high mountain.'

The head of the Saviour is surrounded by a cruciferous nimbus, like that of the Virgin in the above-described drawing, and He appears to hold a roll in His left hand.

Two very rudely designed angels hover above His head, and two others occupy the upper angles of the picture, the interstices of the latter being filled in with foliage and branches

springing from vases; that on the right hand being in an unusual position.

The strangely emaciated black figure of the Tempter (destitute of tail, but with hoof-like feet), and the crowd of heads at the side and bottom of the design, as also the bust within a frame holding two rosette-bearing rods, merit particular notice.

My interpretation of the Irish Figure was made solely from a study of the picture itself, without suggestion from any quarter. I had great difficulty in making up my mind whether the meaning were a personage at a window in the building, or whether it were simply a framed picture exhibited in front of the building. I was not then aware of Professor Westwood's description, which takes the latter view. It is obvious that this view gives to the representation the nature of a reflection or comment more pointedly than the view which I have taken in the text.

I will here add another quotation from Professor Westwood, in which he describes and characterizes the *Book of Kells:* 'It is the most astonishing book of the Four Gospels which exists in the world, and it is in Trinity College,

Dublin, where it was placed along with the books of Archbishop Usher, after his death in 1656, where it has since remained, and where I trust it will ever remain, as the glory of Ireland' (*The Book of Kells: a Lecture*, &c., p. 6).

For a partial illustration of the contents of this Appendix, see the illustration facing p. 77.

APPENDIX D

THE BRITISH ORIGIN OF THE ENAMELLED FIGURE

(p. 91)

I am greatly indebted to my friend Mr. C. F. Bell, the Assistant Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, for the following observations upon the technical characteristics of early *cloisonnée* enamels. These observations are very germane to, and indeed were partly occasioned by, the questions which surround the Enamel in the Alfred Jewel.

Setting aside the reliquary at Poitiers, which, if it could really justify its claim to having been a gift of Justinian II to St. Radigund, would be by far the oldest piece of Byzantine enamel work in existence, as well as all such specimens as have no inscriptions or documentary evidence to indicate their age, there exist, apparently, only two enamelled objects

of supposed Byzantine workmanship that can be maintained to be older than the Alfred Jewel. These are the iron crown of Monza and the golden altar of Saint Ambrose at Milan.

With regard to the first, apart from the controversy as to whether it truly was amongst the jewels given to the cathedral by Theodolinda, there seems to be some uncertainty as to whether there is any *cloisonnée* enamel about the crown at all. Du Sommerard, who was allowed to make a drawing of it which is reproduced in his *Arts au Moyen Age* (Album, série x, pl. 14), speaks of incrustations of jewels, but makes no mention of enamel. His carefully coloured illustration shows the plaques described by Labarte (*Arts Industriels*, i. 312), but the emerald-green ground that figures in the description is not indicated. Du Sommerard's plate fails in one or two other particulars to tally with Labarte's description; and as the latter speaks of his difficulty in obtaining a sight of the crown, it is possible that he mistook in this instance, as he appears to have done in the case of the Limburg reliquary, what M. Molinier (*Trésor de Saint Marc de Venise*, p. 48) calls *la verroterie cloisonnée*—that is, presumably, glass mosaic inlaid in golden cells—for *cloisonnée* enamel. At any rate, some fresh opinion is surely needed to establish the iron crown as a monument of this class of enamel work.

To turn to the altar of Saint Ambrose. It was made in 838; and Labarte admits that the Latin inscriptions upon it, and the Latin name of its artist, proclaim the Italian origin of the greater part of the work. But the enamels which form a comparatively unimportant part of the decoration 'doivent,' he says, 'avoir été exécutés par un des artistes grecs qui travaillaient en grand nombre en Italie à cette époque. On remarquera que les carnations des figures sont rendues en

émail blanc opaque' (*Histoire des Arts Industriels*, iii. 10). Of these enamels the most striking appear to be eight small, circular medallions upon the doors at the back of the altar. These medallions do not form an integral portion of the work, but are affixed, in the manner of jewels, to the framework of the silver-gilt bas-reliefs, and may in fact be amongst those very English enamels whose discovery upon the early shrines in continental churches and museums Mr. Starkie Gardner predicts (*Catalogue of European Enamels exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club*, 1897, p. ix). Each represents a diademed head seen in full face, a palm branch, or perhaps a wing, appearing above each shoulder against a translucent green background. In motive they thus present an extraordinarily close parallel to the Alfred Jewel (Du Sommerard, *Arts au Moyen Age*, Album, série ix, planches 18 and 19).

The earliest enamels of incontestably Byzantine origin, which can be dated with accuracy by documentary evidence, seem to go no further back than the beginning of the tenth century. It cannot, however, be said that these works, with those of closely subsequent periods, have the appearance of being the productions of the school in its infancy and early development. Very considerable technical accomplishment is shown in the manipulation of the extremely narrow gold cloisons, disposed for the most part in straight or slightly curved lines, and filling even the spaces of the drapery with closely laid chevrons or parallel stripes; while the innumerable minute cells thus formed are filled with homogeneous, brilliant, many-hued enamels. A warm tone of pink is invariably used to represent flesh.

An impressive object, possessing certain characteristics in

common with the Jewel and other supposed Celtic-Saxon enamels, is the eagle fibula found at Mainz, and now in the museum there. The present setting of the enamelled eagle has been supposed to be Frankish, of the latter part of the tenth or earlier years of the eleventh century, and the eight small enamelled jewels inserted in the border confirm this view, as they closely resemble the jewels incrusted upon the frame of the Crucifixion plaque in the Reiche-Capelle at Munich, which has usually been attributed to that age (Von Hefner-Alteneck, *Trachten des christlichen Mittelalters*; Schlumberger, *Nicephorus Phocas*). The figure of the eagle, presumably, consisted originally of five plaques, one representing the head, another the tail, two others the outspread wings, and a fifth the body of the bird. This last is missing, its place having been supplied, apparently at the time the setting was made, by a plaque of engraved gold. This circumstance seems in favour of the idea that the enamels are of foreign workmanship, and earlier than the setting.

The cloisons of neither the eagle nor the Roach Smith ouche are as narrow as those employed by the Byzantine enamellers, although they are at most only half the width of those made use of in the Alfred Jewel. The doubling of the cloisons into loops, not commonly seen in Byzantine work but remarkable in the Jewel, is also noticeable in the eagle. Amongst the five colours employed in the eagle are the dark, translucent green, and the yellow, considered by Mr. Gardner as characteristic of Celtic-Saxon enamels, and also the opaque white such as is used for the flesh tint in the Jewel and the ouche, and, as Labarte particularly remarks, in the closely analogous heads upon the altar of Saint Ambrose.

Of all these monuments the enamel of the Alfred Jewel is at once the coarsest and most primitive in execution. Having been protected by the rock-crystal pane, its surface is presumably in much the same state as when it left the maker's hands. It was, evidently, when it came out of the furnace, extremely uneven and rough, and had to be subjected to a grinding process, traces of which are still apparent. The gold cloisons are dull with minute scratches, and where two ran close together they have become one confused, ragged line. Both the eagle and the ouche, although exposed for long periods to the direct action of the soil, preserve a far higher degree of polish.

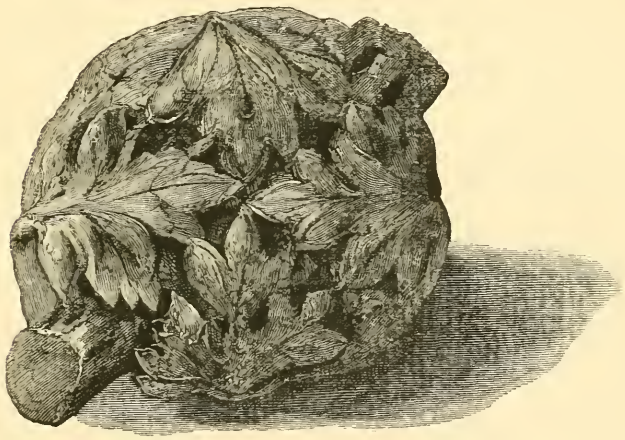
Yet the rough workmanship by itself cannot, it must be remembered, be held to preclude the Byzantine origin of this enamel, since, as there is not known to exist a single indisputably dated work of the Byzantine school in its primitive stages, it is impossible to assert that this school was not, during the lifetime of king Alfred, producing work as rude in execution as the Jewel. It may be that such a specimen will some day make its appearance, and determine the Eastern origin of this enamel and all cognate works. It is also possible that the discovery of an undoubtedly Irish example may place above all dispute the contention that it is of Celtic-Saxon origin, and finally justify the absorption into the same class of the ouche, the eagle, the eight medallions upon the altar of Saint Ambrose, nay, even of the crown of Theodolinda itself.

APPENDIX E

ATHELNEY ABBEY

(p. 115)

The Abbey of Athelney was founded by king Alfred, in pious gratitude for mercies received.



There are no remains now visible on its site. The materials have doubtless passed into the neigh-

bouring farm buildings. The spot is marked by a monumental pillar, which was erected in 1801 by the then proprietor of the land, with an historical inscription, which is not too inaccurate for the time in which it was composed. It runs thus:

> King Ælfred the Great, in the year of our Lord 879, having been defeated by the Danes, fled for refuge to the forest of Athelney, where he lay concealed from his enemies for the space of a whole year. He soon after regained possession of the throne; and in grateful remembrance of the protection he had received, under the favour of Heaven, he erected a monastery on this spot, and endowed it with all the lands contained in the Isle of Athelney. To perpetuate the memory of so remarkable an incident in the life of that illustrious prince, this edifice was founded by John Slade, Esq., of Maunsel, the proprietor of Athelney, and lord of the manor of North Petherton, A.D. 1801.

The present representative of this gentleman is his great-great-grandson, Sir Cuthbert Slade of Maunsel, Bart., lord of the Manor of North Petherton.

The Abbey of Athelney never attained to any considerable wealth or importance; but a sculptured boss, which was found on the site,

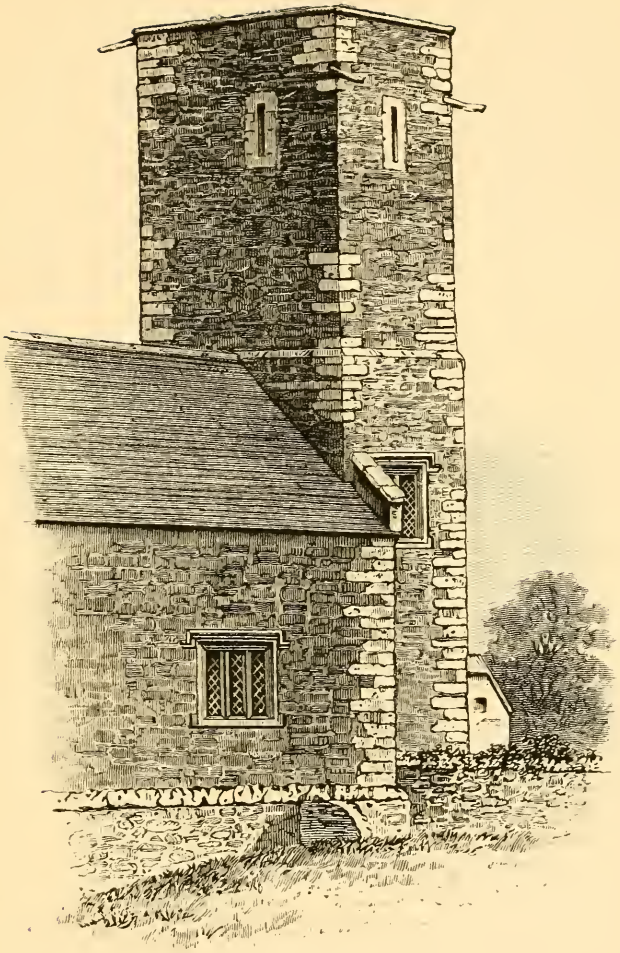
and which is here figured in two aspects, after drawings by Mr. Alfred A. Clarke of Wells, seems to indicate some costly architecture among the abbey buildings in the fourteenth century.

APPENDIX F

NORTH NEWTON CHURCH

(p. 139)

The church of North Newton has features suggestive of ancient celebrity, but the dates which are historically known, do not mount so high as might have been expected. The tower, which is the oldest part, and to which the high antiquity of a thousand years has been popularly attributed, speaks by its architecture, which is here represented. The earliest known date connected with the fabric is 1292, in which year the foundation stone of the elder chapel was laid by Richard de Barfleur, called also Richard de Plesseto. This being a chantry chapel, the endowment was taken away in 1548, and the fabric decayed. In the time of Charles I, Sir Thomas Wrothe built a new chapel and provided



THE TOWER OF NORTH NEWTON CHURCH.

To face p. 192.]

a stipend for the minister, which still continues. The Parable Door, the Oak Screen, and the Pulpit are evidently of the same period, and were probably given by the same benefactor.

The village of North Newton, originally a chapelry, was separated from the mother parish of North Petherton, and formed into an ecclesiastical parish on the twenty-third day of March, 1880. It is situated two miles north of Durston Station (Great Western Railway), four and a half south-west of Bridgewater, and seven north-east of Taunton. These particulars are taken from a little book entitled *The Church and Parish of St. Peter's, North Newton*, by the Rev. L. H. King, M.A., Vicar; to whom I am also personally indebted for some interesting local information.

APPENDIX G

THE PRESENTATION OF THE ALFRED JEWEL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

(pp. 140 and 145.)

I HAVE been favoured by Sir Alexander Acland Hood with the following extract from the Manuscript of Mr. Thomas Palmer, which is preserved in Fairfield House:—

'NEWENTON, NEWTON, OR PETHERTON PARK.

'The Park and Manor of Newentón belonged 'to the King at the time of the general survey, 'and probably this is the Petherton where king 'John held his court. The House was on the 'north side of the Park, where there is now a 'tenement called Parker's Field. At this place

'a remarkable piece of antiquity was dug up in 'the year 1693, which is, by Dr. Hickes and 'other antiquaries, adjudged to have been of 'the age of King Alfred, the letters being such 'as were introduced by this King in imitation 'of the Roman Alphabet, and never used before 'or since.

'Doctor Hickes interprets this inscription to be '"Alfred ordered me to be made"; and supposes 'the enamelled figure to be the picture of 'St. Cuthbert, the tutelar saint of that King. 'The whole is of gold, over the enamel is a piece 'of rock crystal, half an inch thick: the gold 'rim is cut through to form the letters of the 'inscription. This is now among the antiquities 'of the University of Oxford.'

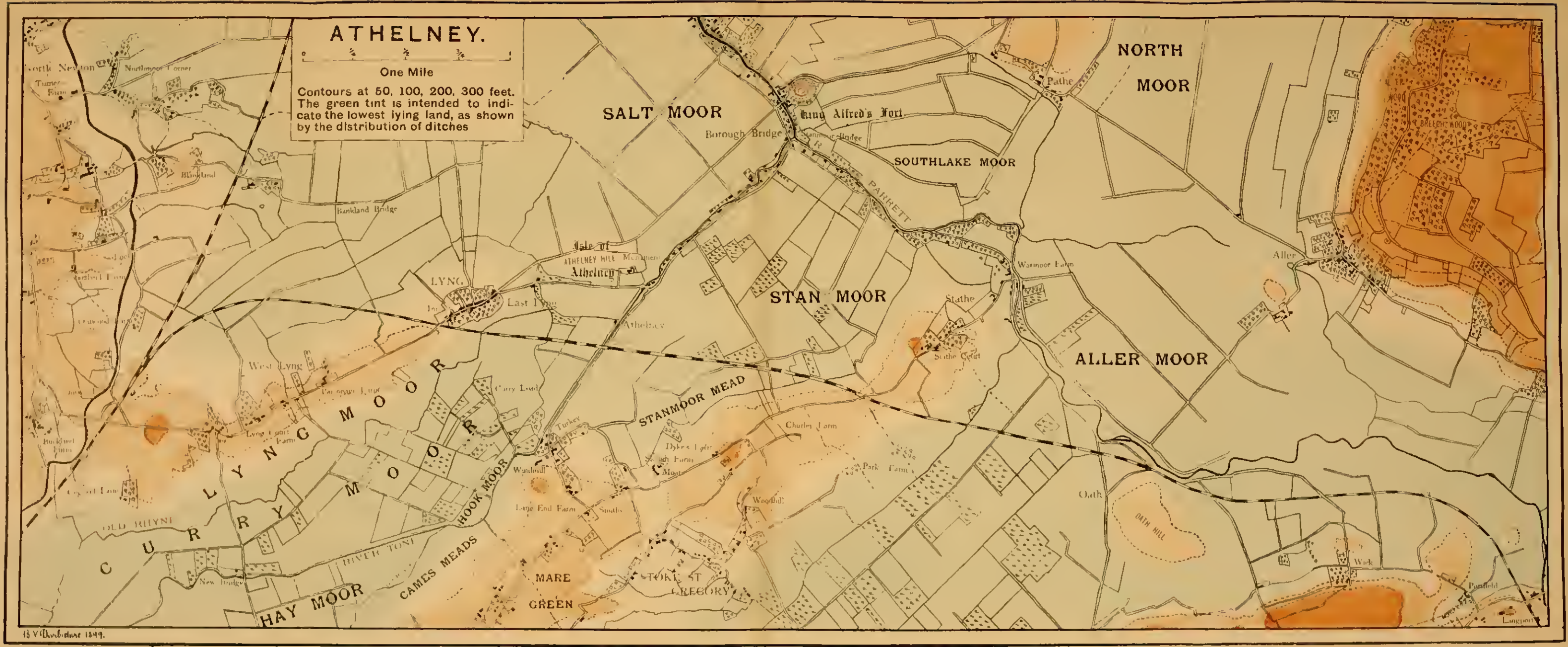
The Keeper of the Archives (Mr. Bayne of Christ Church) has kindly made search at my request, and he writes: 'I have gone carefully through the Convocation Register for 1718, and can find no reference to the Jewel, nor to Mr. Palmer who died 6 March, 1735.'

The Register of Benefactions of the Ashmolean Museum has a paragraph in Latin, which however gives no information on this point.

The most interesting piece I have found on this point is in Collinson's *History of Somerset* (1791), vol. i, p. 87, where he is speaking of Athelney Abbey: it is as follows:—

Some allusion to the vision of St. Cuthbert above-mentioned is supposed to have been intended by a little curious amulet of enamel and gold, richly ornamented, that was found in 1693 in Newton Park, at some distance northward from the abbey. On one side of it is a rude figure of a person sitting crowned, and holding in each hand a sceptre surmounted by a lily, which Dr. Hickes and other antiquaries have imagined to be designed for St. Cuthbert. The other side is filled by a large flower, and round the edge is the following legend: AELFRED MEC HEIT GEVVRCAN; that is, *Alfred ordered me to be made.* This piece of antiquity is now in the museum at Oxford, accompanied with the accounts of doctors Hickes and Musgrave, and the following memorandum: "Nov. 16, 1718, Tho. Palmer, esq; of Fairfield in Somerset-"shire, put this ancient picture of St. Cuthbert, made by order "of king Alfred, into my hands to bee conveyed to y^r^ Bodlean "Library in Oxford, where his father Nat. Palmer, esq; lately "dead, desired it might be placed and preserved.

"Geo. Clark."


ATHELNEY.
One Mile
Contours at 50, 100, 200, 300 feet.
The green tint is intended to indicate the lowest lying land, as shown by the distribution of ditches
SALT MOOR
NORTH MOOR
King Alfred's Fort
Borough Bridge
SOUTHLAKE MOOR
PARRETT
Pathe
Bankland Bridge
Isle of Athelney
ATHELNEY HILL
LYNG
East Lyng
Athelney
STAN MOOR
Stathe
Stathe Court
ALLER MOOR
Aller
West Lyng
LYNG MOOR
CURRY MOOR
Curry Load
STANMOOR MEAD
Turkey
HOOK MOOR
Churley Farm
Park Farm
Windmill
Lane End Farm
Woodhill
Oath
OATH HILL
Wick
OLD RHYNE
RIVER TONE
CAMES MEADS
HAY MOOR
New Bridge
MARE GREEN
STOKE ST GREGORY
Langport
B V Darbishire 1899.